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ART. 1.—*Remarks of the HON. DANIEL WEBSTER, in the Senate of the United States, on the Resolution offered by the Hon. Mr. Downs, of Louisiana, relative to the Funeral of GENERAL ZACHARY TAYLOR, late President of the United States. New York Herald, July 11th, 1850.*

THIS brief, temperate, and apparently well-pondered eulogy, pronounced in the Senate of the United States by the great orator and statesman of Massachusetts, upon the character of General Taylor, late President of the United States, between the death-bed and the grave, must have accorded with the solemn feeling then prevailing, not only in that body and throughout the capitol, but also throughout the nation. At that time, though hardly a day had elapsed since the illustrious deceased had closed his life, much of that nation had become aware of the event, and was reflecting deeply upon its consequences. The body politic, by the extraordinary application of scientific improvements to the diffusion of intelligence, had then a quickness of perception, a power of rapid communication, that likened it somewhat to the body human. Through the wonder-workings of this power, the whole country, even before the remains of the dead were entombed at Washington, throbbed almost simultaneously with the same pulsations of regret and sympathy. It was as if the heart had sent forth a strong impulse, which pervaded, with electric celerity, the whole body. It was a fitting time to exert, in such a manner, such a power. It was probably

the first time it had been exerted to such a marvellous extent.

The occasion which called forth these remarks from the eminent Senator, was one that was likely to give them unusual fervor as well as solemnity. Those who preceded him had felt such to be its influence, and had spoken with corresponding emotion. The Massachusetts statesman seemed to deem it a time for words of truth and soberness alone. His heart seemed to be held back from his tongue, and his strong intellect gave out its biddings with all the calmness and dignity of ordinary times. He may have thought that such a semblance of moderation was in keeping with the gravity of his character, if not also with the gravity of the subject; and probably he judged rightly. It was certainly a grateful change, to leave the embossments and gilt of some of the eulogies heard at that time in other quarters,* and turn to the severe simplicity of the address, now under consideration. Probably this very simplicity all the more strongly invited attention, and awakened a deep train of reflections, which another manner might have left dormant. We therefore conclude, that the impression made by Mr. Webster on his auditory, (which embraced not only the Senate, but a large concourse of other hearers,) was eminently congruous and effective.

We shall be likely, in the course of this article, to allude particularly to those influences of a military character which are stated in this address to the Senate as having led to the elevation of General Taylor to the high place, from which he had so recently been wrested by the hand of death. We shall also feel strongly moved to bring into relief several other passages, which so sententiously and expressively present the marked characteristics of General Taylor to view. At this stage, we shall make only a quotation or two, which are so eloquent in his praise, that we feel they cannot meet the eye of our readers without warming their minds into respect, if not admiration, for the departed, and thus make

* We may well except from this animadversion the few remarks made by Mr. Conrad, of the House of Representatives. Speaking in behalf of Louisiana, the State in which the illustrious dead claimed his citizenship, his remarks were touching and appropriate, and sketched out the characteristics of General Taylor with boldness and truth.

them the more willing to accompany us onward through our labor of justice and of kindness. The words of the eulogist, in the midst of his remarks, flowed into the following just and encomiastic tribute: — “I Suppose, Sir, that no case ever happened in the very best days of the Roman Republic, where any man found himself clothed with the highest authority in the State under circumstances more repelling all suspicion of pursuing any crooked path of politics, or all suspicion of having been actuated by sinister views or purposes, than in the case of the worthy, and eminent, and good man, whose death we now deplore.” We can hardly present to our minds a measure of encomium more abundant, pressed down, and running over, than was presented to the minds of those who listened to this sentence. To deserve such praise in our country, and under such circumstances, is, certainly, glory enough; and well might the distinguished orator add, under his sincere conviction that it *was* deserved, that General Taylor had “left to the people of his country a legacy in this: he has left them a bright example, which addresses itself with peculiar force to the young and rising generation; for it tells them that there is a path to the highest degree of renown, straight onward, without change or deviation.” Well might this broad seal of approbation be fixed by the greatest of minds, the most sagacious of statesmen, the most ripe and sound of politicians, to such an example, so rare in a republic like ours, where the temptations to change and deviation are so numerous and so alluring. A concurrence of circumstances like that which marked the life under review, almost alone, is likely to exclude them. Ordinary careers to eminence in civil affairs are beset with them throughout, and it is hardly in the strength of human forbearance to resist them. Fortunately for our country, the first experiment of our government had the benefit of a leading man who exhibited a similar example. Washington was not raised to the Presidency; he was merely transferred from one dominant point to another, both upon the same level. He had no climbing to do, and consequently was independent of party aid.

Mr. Webster states that General Taylor’s services were mostly upon the frontiers. This is true; and yet we are not warranted in supposing that his life had no training but in the

camp. General Taylor had reached the age of manhood,* though still a young man, when he entered the army. The many years which preceded this important event of his life were the plastic years of that life. His character had then, no doubt, taken much of its form and pressure. We have not understood when he moved from Virginia to Kentucky. If it were after he had passed the age of infancy, such a journey, made, as all such journeys in those days through that region were made, could not have been without its deep engravings on his youthful mind. Obligated to share in the rough and tumble, the privations and exposures, of a long and hazardous route over mountains and through a wilderness, where as yet there were only Indian trails, or bridle paths, that youthful mind would develop itself more in a few weeks, than, under ordinary circumstances, in as many years.

The condition of such a family, even after the migration had come to an end, would, for some years perhaps, be that of destitution of most of the comforts, and many of the refinements, of life. Education, especially, in all its higher branches, would necessarily then be out of reach. Common schools spring up, in such cases, of course, even under the shade of the forest. In such rude nurseries for the mind, General Taylor may have begun his intellectual training. With the spread of advantages, that training improved; and when, at the age of almost twenty-four, he entered the army, his general intelligence placed him on a footing with most of his comrades.

But it was doubtless during this period of boyhood and youth, that General Taylor imbibed his taste for rural life. He seemed to regard agriculture, in all its forms, with strong and predominant favor. The surface of the earth, subdued, cultivated, productive, was ever a pleasant sight to his eye. Its teeming varieties caught his glance in all situations, under all circumstances, and would often call forth a cheerful expression, in look or in word, at times when that situation was beset with profound anxiety. Farming was a subject on which he was more fluent and animated than on any

*General Taylor was born in Orange county, Virginia, 1784; and married Miss Margaret Smith of Maryland in 1810.

other. He had read much upon it, had thought much respecting it, and had done as much to improve its character and results as his profession, so adverse to such pursuits, would admit.

General Taylor, therefore, when he started in his career as a military man, had some of the best qualifications for success in it. His frame, thoroughly adult and matured, and hardened for endurance by a training from boyhood to manhood that made it compact and sinewy, fitted him for the vicissitudes of service. He had also acquired, it is probable, during his subjection to the fare and labor of a new country, those habits of abstemiousness, which were likewise equally favorable to the preservation of health and strength amid those vicissitudes. His education, of course, had not been military in any sense of the word, unless the hazards of a frontier life, which made most persons exposed to them, young and old, familiar with the rifle, and always under many of their most appalling aspects, may have been deemed, in part, such an education. When he joined his regiment, he had to learn, like nearly all the commissioned officers of that time, the whole routine of his duty. How far he became proficient, how well he prepared himself for the most arduous and responsible calls of duty, the opening events of the war of 1812, which was declared some few years after he had entered the army, give the most satisfactory proof.

In April, 1812, Captain Taylor was assigned to the command of Fort Harrison, on the Wabash, about fifty miles in advance of the settlements. This work had been hastily built by General Harrison, on his march to Tippecanoe, having one row of high pickets on three sides, and log-huts on the fourth side, with a common block-house at each end of the row. The garrison under Captain Taylor's command consisted of a broken company of infantry. Its strength, as well as that of the fort, had become well known to the Indians generally, through the small parties of those who professed friendship for the Americans, and had been in the habit of frequently visiting the place. The Prophet's party, still somewhat formidable, though repulsed at Tippecanoe the year previous with loss, was then in hostile array on the Wabash above, and was expected to attack the fort. At this moment of hazard, Captain Taylor was the only officer

present, his subaltern having been allowed a leave of absence for the recovery of his health, and he was himself then slowly recovering from a severe fever. He had with him, however, a surgeon, who rendered good service to his commander throughout the subsequent attack. On the 3d of September, 1812, two men were killed by the Indians within a few hundred yards of the fort; and late in the evening of the 4th, some thirty or forty Indians approached it with a white flag, informing Captain Taylor that the principal Chief would have a talk with him the next morning. Captain Taylor was too well versed in Indian wiles not to know that this demonstration was the precursor of hostility. He accordingly kept the party at bay, and immediately completed all his arrangements necessary to repulse such hostility.

The force with which Captain Taylor was to effect this did not exceed fifteen men; and even some of those were, like himself, only in a state of convalescence. As had been anticipated, the attack was made that night, the few defenders being found at their posts. Almost simultaneously with the discharge of musketry on both sides, an alarm was given by the non-commissioned officer in charge of one of the block-houses, the under story of which contained the provisions of the fort, that the lower part of the building was on fire. It had been an easy matter for the Indians, amid the darkness and the interchange of musketry, to creep up to the base of the block-house, there being no exterior ditch or impediments in the way, and effect a design of that kind. The wood of which the fort had been made, was at that time dry and combustible. The proper orders were immediately given to extinguish the fire, buckets and water being at hand; but the cry of "fire" had caused some confusion among the men, so few in number, and many of them still debilitated from sickness; and before a check could be applied, the flames had communicated with some whiskey among the supplies, and at once spread aloft to the roof. Captain Taylor, in his official report of this event, says:—"As the block-house adjoined the barracks that made part of the fortifications, most of the men immediately gave themselves up for lost, and I had the greatest difficulty in getting any of my orders executed. And, Sir, what from the raging of the fire, the yelling of several hundred Indians, the cries of nine

women and children, — the wives, a part of soldiers, a part of citizens, who had taken shelter in the fort, — and the desponding of so many men, which was worse than all, I can assure you my feelings were very unpleasant.” “And to add to our misfortune, two of the stoutest men in the fort, and whom I had every confidence in, jumped the pickets and left us.”

This simple statement shows a fearful crisis. It was one of those points of extreme flexion, when the bough either breaks, or regains its position by a force that exceeds the pressure. Captain Taylor adds to the foregoing, with an ingenuousness that suits his character, “but my presence of mind did not for a moment forsake me.” We can fully believe the truth of this assertion, which found a warrant in the measures for averting the imminent destruction, that were at once adopted. He saw that, by removing a portion of the roof of the barrack contiguous to the burning block-house, and keeping that end constantly wet, the flames could probably be arrested. The loss of the block-house would leave only a gap of about thirty feet in width, which could be filled by a temporary breastwork. His men resumed their confidence at hearing these wise and suitable orders, and went heartily to work to execute them. While some of them kept up a discharge of musketry from the other block-house and from the two bastions, others, with Doctor Clark (the gallant coadjutor of Captain Taylor during this perilous night) at their head, ascended to the top of the threatened barrack, and in a short time threw off sufficient of the roof to fulfil the necessary purpose in view. Of the men who discharged this important duty, and who were in unobstructed range of the enemy’s fire, and were rendered shining marks by the flames, one was killed, and two were wounded. Notwithstanding this successful check of the fire in that quarter, it still frequently burst forth in other quarters, and kept the small garrison in constant anxiety about this destructive enemy within, which was even more formidable than the enemy without, though the latter was repulsed in all his efforts to enter the fort through the breach, or at other quarters, only by the same hardy and inflexible perseverance which had subdued the flames.

The assault did not slacken for the space of seven hours.

At about 6 o'clock the next morning, the Indians, finding the guns of the fort, though few in number, aimed with deadly effect, after daylight exposed them to view, withdrew to a safe distance. During the following day, the breach was closed up by a line of pickets, made out of the materials of the guard-house, and the fort remained without further molestation. As will be anticipated, it appears, by Captain Taylor's report, that all the contractor's supplies for the garrison were consumed. On this subject, so well fitted to produce despondence and importunity, the report merely says, "we lost the whole of our provisions, but must make out to live upon green corn until we can get a supply ;" words of submission and good nature, which, under the circumstances, strike us as being in admirable harmony with the resolution and fertility of shifts that marked the event from which this destitution sprung.

We have entered into the details of this affair more, perhaps, than would seem at first view to be warranted. A little reflection, however, will show that it deserves all the space we have given to it. In such cases, it is not alone the numbers engaged that give them character. Difficulties often multiply as numbers diminish. Captain Taylor found it so in this instance. His fort was small, it is true ; and yet it was out of all proportion to the force with which he was to defend it, and gave him little chance of defending it with success. He could place but one or two men at each face of it. This inadequacy of means might well have discouraged his men, even while the defences remained entire. When a wide breach was made in them, it was natural that they should have despaired. All officers are not equal to such emergencies. Indeed, it is only a few who prove themselves to be so. Captain Taylor happened to prove himself one of those few. This defence of Fort Harrison exhibited most of the strong points of his character. He there proved himself to be a firm and able man, fully equal to the strait in which he found himself, and one who would not probably be found wanting in other straits of greater magnitude.

This instance of good fortune on the interior frontier was of national importance. A series of disasters had happened there by which the nation was filled with doubt and discouragement. The Indians had signalized their zeal in favor of the

British, and their enmity towards us, by hearty and efficient coöperation in the field at Mackinac, and by a cunningly devised plan of getting possession of the fort at Chicago, following up the event by treachery and bloodshed, which showed what formidable auxiliaries our new enemy had found within our own borders. Fort Harrison was in no suitable condition for successful defence. Prudence would have dictated its abandonment in time to save the few men there from a destruction that seemed otherwise inevitable. Captain Taylor had no orders for such a course, and felt himself bound to defend it to the last extremity. Chicago fell, when it ought to have stood, and could have stood; Fort Harrison stood, when, under the command of most men, it would have fallen. The two instances were a trial of character, and the result showed who was found wanting in the hour of need; who was to sink into obscurity; who to rise in the scale of services and distinction, as opportunity might open the way.*

During the ensuing years of this war with Great Britain, Major Taylor was upon the western and northwestern frontier, having no share in the more conspicuous events that marked its progress in other parts of the United States.

At the reorganization and reduction of the army at the peace of 1815, Major Taylor, according to the mode adopted at the time, in order to crowd as much rank and experience as possible into the diminished establishment, was retained as a Captain, with the brevet rank of Major. The more fresh and, perhaps, importunate claims of those who had served in the brilliant campaigns of 1814 and the beginning of 1815, may have led the Military Board, to which was assigned the difficult task of selecting the complement of officers to remain in service, to weigh somewhat lightly the initial success on land of the war, — the first dayspring of victory that broke through the thick darkness of disaster with which it had begun. Major Taylor had no hesitation as to the course he ought to take. He quietly declined to accede to any surrender of his well-earned rank, and prepared to resume an agricultural life with feelings that probably had less of regret in them than gratification. Fortunately for the country,

* Captain Taylor received the brevet rank of Major for his services in the defence of Fort Harrison. It was the first compliment of this kind conferred during this war.

however, this turning of his sword into a ploughshare was not permitted. He was subsequently retained with his rank as Major, and resumed his military duties as an infantry officer, which still kept him on the interior frontier.

During the years which elapsed between this restoration and the war in Florida, Major Taylor became successively promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel and Colonel of infantry, and held various commands near and among the Indians, which always involved more or less responsibility, the tribes long retaining an unquiet feeling, arising from a partiality for the British, and an aversion to the United States, that frequently broke out into open hostility. Among these ruptures, which always began in massacre, and generally ended in hollow truces, that which was termed the Black Hawk war threatened to throw back the advancing settlements from many broad and beautiful sections of country, fast assuming the aspect of civilization and cultivation. Colonel Taylor was associated with General Atkinson in the campaign that brought this contest to a fortunate close.

Mr. Webster, in his address, quoted a remark made by one of his predecessors, as to the influence of Indian warfare in forming able commanders; namely, "that it is not in Indian wars that heroes are celebrated, but that it is there they are formed." It is no doubt true that few men have become favorably celebrated for their achievements while commanding troops against Indians. Many have lost reputations previously acquired, while thus commanding. It is generally a blind, haphazard warfare, and one in which ordinary generalship has little scope. No one, however, can contend with such an enemy, and in such a country as they are only found in, without finding a constant necessity for vigilance, activity, readiness for change of plans, and the exercise of many of the qualities which are important in conducting any campaign against any enemy. General Taylor's career as a military man was, with little, if any, exception, on the Indian frontiers. His military experience was therefore altogether in that severe and profitable school. This experience was not always that of active service. But there is no military service on such a frontier that allows the qualities to which allusion has just been made, to rust in idleness or disuse. On the maritime frontier it is otherwise. A season of peace gives there an

assurance of security from external attack, that warrants a confidence in such security under all ordinary circumstances. Hence, such maritime commands, while they are generally marked by a high condition of discipline, and great proficiency in all military exercises, are not the best nurseries for field commands. When General Taylor was engaged in the Black Hawk war, it was only in a subordinate capacity. He had no opportunity to exhibit his perseverance and boldness in following up the track of an Indian enemy, his thorough familiarity with forest warfare, and with the best modes of meeting it. When he came into the command of a body of troops in Florida, such an opportunity presented itself.

During the autumn of 1838, while the Indian war in Florida, after a lapse of more than two years, remained as implacable as ever, General Taylor was ordered to march from Tampa Bay against the Indians, with a column of about a thousand men, mostly regulars. At the time he left that place for the central parts of the interior peninsula, in order to seek a body of the enemy reported to be gathered there, occasional negotiations went on between the contending parties, as the olive branch was always held out by our troops to those Indians who might choose to emigrate; emigration being then the stern and sole condition on which any overture could be received from them. This made each march of our columns a *quasi* embassy of peace. The Indians were well aware of this semi-pacific character of our warfare, and made free use of the white flag on all occasions; sometimes, as the event proved, with a sincere desire to end their restless wanderings in emigration; more generally, as a cover for sinister purposes.

This double capacity in the Florida commanders was often a serious embarrassment to them. As they could not generally determine whether the flag met them in truth or in guile, without a council, or a talk, this tedious introduction often delayed the march, when promptitude of movement was most necessary. General Taylor, as he moved onward towards the Ochechobe, understanding the Indian character, would seem to have resolved that no delays should arise from such a cause. He steadily neared the resorts where he was told a stand would be made, establishing such small forts in his rear as prudence and his force would admit, counseling, or talking, as

he went along, always ready, and always determined, to make the attack, whenever and wherever that stand should be made.

On the 25th of December, 1838, General Taylor found the enemy had taken possession of a hammock, which was nearly surrounded by a swamp, covered with *saw-grass* about five feet high, and so wet as to be impassable for horse, and crossed with difficulty even by men. Without any hesitation, he resolved on an immediate attack. The case obviously admitted no delay. Whatever might be the advantages of a position, chosen, no doubt, by the enemy with care, and whatever the probabilities of success arising from those advantages, and the superiority of his numbers, yet, such is the prudential character of Indian warfare, that the lapse of a night might lead to a change of mind, and consequent change of scene. The experience of General Taylor, particularly his observations on the events of the Black Hawk war, taught him most distinctly all this. Another day might only call for another march. Besides, he probably saw no demand for reconnoissance, as his determination did not depend on the numbers before him, even if they could be ascertained by delay; and the defence likely to be made could not be better known the next day than the next hour.

After the manner of the arrangement at Cowpens, General Taylor placed his volunteers, forming about a quarter part of his force, in the front line, with directions to fall behind the second line, consisting of regulars, provided a retrograde movement became necessary. According to this arrangement the swamp was entered, and the hammock approached. As soon as the first line came within rifle shot, a fire broke forth from the thicket, which killed the gallant officer (Colonel Gentry, of Missouri,) in command of it. This severe loss, combined with other losses, led this line to fall back; and it came no more into the fight as a body; producing, however, no other influence on the fortunes of the day, than to induce the enemy to advance a little from his coverts, and encourage him to receive somewhat more boldly the charge subsequently made by the second line.

General Taylor and staff, as well as the field officers of the regiments, were obliged, by the nature of the swamp, to dismount at the beginning of the advance. But the attack was simple and straight forward, and required little direction.

Each regiment had its position and its object, and went forward steadily and courageously, gradually overcoming the obstacles presented by the saw-grass and the sponginess of the soil. This grass takes up in its growth an unusual quantity of silicious matter, which makes it stiff for its height and slenderness, and gives it serrated edges, which first tear the clothing, and then lacerate the skins, of those who attempt to pass through it. To divide this dense and somewhat matted mass was slow and painful work; and when the line came within reach of the enemy's fire, that work became dangerous in proportion to its slowness. The Indians saw all these difficulties, and the advantages they gave to their concealed position; and as their well-directed fire, coming from every trunk of a tree, and from many of its branches, prostrated officer after officer, and thinned some of the companies to such a degree, that one company (of Colonel Thompson's 6th Infantry) entered the hammock with only four bayonets, they had reason to hope that the second line would soon follow the first. But General Taylor had no fear of the result after a few fires had been received by that second line. The hammock was gained in due time, and the enemy dispersed after a contest of about three hours. After some ineffectual attempts had been made to cut off the retreat of the Indians, General Taylor turned his attention to the wounded, and then slowly retraced his steps towards Tampa.*

It has been said, in the spirit of animadversion, that General Taylor, in this action, took the bull by the horns. He did not hesitate to do this, as he had no chance of seizing him in a less formidable quarter. As we have already remarked, had any time, particularly if a night had, been lost in looking out for weak points, the bull would not probably have been there to be seized at all. It was necessary to take him by the head. As soon as he should turn, all attempts to seize him would be vain. Nor did it seem expedient to General Taylor to lose a moment in endeavors to see how the enemy could escape, if defeated; as he had reason to believe the wary Indians would decamp at the first demonstration of such an endeavor. A stand had at last been made, and an

* Colonel Taylor received the brevet rank of Brigadier General for his services at the battle of Ochechobe.

immediate advantage must be taken of it, before fear, doubt, or caprice should produce its usual effect. And he well knew that little expectation of captures in such contests could be entertained. These chartered libertines of the forest look behind, as well as before. They never willingly go into a place, without first ascertaining how they can get out of it again. Escape is always in their calculations. General Taylor intended to meet them on their own terms. They evidently offered a fight at the edge of the hammock which they occupied, provided the approach were made through the swamp towards the side of his march. The advantage given by this impediment, no doubt, alone led them to make the offer.

Besides, General Taylor had reason to think that even a dislodgment of the enemy, with some loss, would promote the objects of the war. The successful massacre of Major Dade's party encouraged the Indians to meet General Clinch at the Outhlacouchee. A new coalition of chiefs had been made near the Ochechobee. They stood there loosely banded together; to be, perhaps, more united and strong, if successful; to segregate and scatter, if unsuccessful. After the battle of Ochechobee no large body of Florida Indians again offered battle. They fell into small bands, all the more unconquerable while hostile, but more easily tempted to treat, when the rigor of terms became somewhat softened.

The chief command in Florida devolved on General Taylor in May, 1838. Thus far, the war had been a series of experiments. The nature of the country, without a parallel in the latitudes and longitudes of the United States, and the habits and policy of the enemy, had baffled all the attempts made to attain the objects of the war. Movements through the country by columns, starting from widely separated points, and concentrating upon one point, had been proved unsuited to the country and the enemy. He stealthily watched such movements, and easily avoided all contact with them. War by detachments, which patiently followed up trails to hiding places, scoured plains, pierced hammocks, and threaded many of the mazes of the everglades, had better results, but none which warranted a hope of pacification, — that is, general emigration. General Taylor, in coming into command, saw that the case demanded something new. The plan he adopted for prosecuting the war differed from the

preceding plans. This plan embraced a system of squares. The peninsula was run off, with sufficient precision to suit the plan, into large parallelograms, in the centre of each of which was to be constructed a stockade work, to be garrisoned by a suitable force. The different arms of service were to be placed, in the distribution, where they best could operate.

General Taylor, no doubt, anticipated beneficial results from this plan, which seemed to extend something like a tangible guardianship over the whole country ; and, if the garrisons were large enough to admit of detachments, and such detachments were active and vigilant, the enemy must have felt a restraint on his movements, that might have led to more promising overtures of submission. The system was a vast net work, but which had also a vast deal of open work. Many believed the latter would give ample room for skulking parties to keep in their usual motion ; while the works were so many beacons to be avoided, and broke up the force of the war into fragments, so weak as to invite concentration against them separately with flattering hopes of success. This weakness as to numbers probably did not alarm the defender of Fort Harrison. A stockade work, when vigilantly guarded, he believed to be nearly impregnable to Indians. And no doubt such is the fact. But General Taylor had no opportunity to prove his experiment. An arrangement was soon after made with the Indians by General Macomb, the commander-in-chief, who had come on to the seat of war with extraordinary powers, which suspended for a while all hostile operations in Florida ; and before they recommenced, General Taylor had been relieved from his command there.

The annexation of Texas to the United States brought with it many consequences. At the time this event took place, Texas was in a state of hostility with Mexico. There was no actual collision, but there was no peace, between them. They regarded each other with stern and implacable bitterness. The Mexican government did not acknowledge the treaty made by Santa Anna in captivity, and, probably, under the fear of death. It looked upon Texas as still a Province of Mexico, and impatiently anticipated the time when it should be brought back to its allegiance. The disaster at San Jacinto had weakened the Mexican power, and tarnished her fame. The government and the people looked

forward to a campaign that should restore the lost Province, and efface the disgrace that accompanied the loss, with a feverish eagerness and a never dying hope.

The incorporation of Texas with the United States, contiguous and strong, and augmenting her chances of maintaining her independence too manifold to admit of any calculation, so far from cooling that eagerness, or weakening that hope, happened, with some appearance of sufficient cause, to give new energy to both. Texas had been for some time an apple of discord, which was to be thrown into some of the many laps that were spread out to catch it. No one could expect to be the lucky recipient, without also receiving all the consequences the gift entailed. When the United States proved to be that recipient, all the losers most naturally regarded her with jealousy, and some of them with a much stronger feeling. The European nations most interested in this transfer of a nation, after the manner of a large business transaction, probably would have been contented with seeing Texas set up for herself, equally independent of all, and equally under the guardianship of all, so far as respected the designs of Mexico. When those nations saw their transatlantic rival agglutinate this new mass to her already enormous body politic, they at once began to manifest a sympathy for Mexico, most naturally leading that power to expect that her new crusade against her revolted province might be double, if not treble, handed. This sympathetic coalition, however, was not consummated. The two neighbors were permitted to settle their quarrel without interference.

Mr. Webster, in the course of his remarks before the Senate, states that, at a time when he had a short connection with the Executive government, "very perilous and embarrassing circumstances existed between the United States and the Indians on her borders," and adds, that "those who took counsel together on the occasion officially, and were desirous of placing the military command in the safest hands, came to the conclusion that there was no man in the service more fully uniting the qualities of military ability and great personal* prudence than Zachary Taylor, and he was of course appointed to the command." This very complimentary and honorable state-

* We quote the report of Mr. Webster's Address before us; but we can hardly believe that the speaker, so distinguished for sententious rigor of phraseology, made use of this expletive.

ment does not appear, by the report of Mr. Webster's address, to allude to the command conferred on General Taylor at Corpus Christi ; though it has been generally understood, that the selection made on that occasion was the result of councils that weighed deliberately and anxiously the qualifications of those officers whose names came under consideration. It was deemed important by the nation at large, that the officer in charge there, during the approaching collision with Mexico, should unite this "great prudence" with "military ability." On him would probably depend the event of peace or war. On him was to devolve the high responsibility of determining when the gates of Janus should be shut. Well might the councils of the nation seek out, with extreme solicitude, the rare combination referred to by the eminent Senator, since they were about to confide to it a power, on a remote frontier, whose exercise carried with it such momentous consequences.

While General Taylor remained at Corpus Christi with his command, no actual collision was likely to occur. That place was within, or quite near, the undisputed limits of Texas. The Nueces was regarded as the Rubicon. There seemed to be little or nothing beyond that river to occupy or to guard which had ever any connection with Texas. It was, however, considered expedient by the government to advance our military occupation to the Rio Grande, and General Taylor received orders accordingly in April, 1846. His command numbered less than three thousand men, all regulars, embracing every arm of service, and in the best condition for active operations. As the order made the Rio Grande the object of those operations, every supply was suited to that object. Transportation, provisions, stores, were all sufficient to attain it. At a river about half way between Corpus Christi and the Rio Grande, the Mexicans made a stand on the western or right bank, having signified, by a message in due form, their determination to dispute the passage. General Taylor paid no regard to the prohibition or the defiance. His troops, the usual precautions having been taken, passed over the ford, as if no opposition had been threatened. Observing this forward movement, the Mexicans withdrew, so that no blood was spilt on the Colorado ; and General Taylor reached the Rio Grande the latter part of April, no further hinderance besetting his march.

As General Taylor now stood, by order, on the verge of Texas, with a fortified town immediately in front, he deemed it his duty to secure his troops there, in the ordinary way, against such demonstrations of hostility as met his eye. A field-work was accordingly begun without delay on the left bank of the river, under range of some of the works at Matamoros opposite. When this work was sufficiently advanced for defence, a suitable garrison was placed within it, and General Taylor retraced his steps in part, with the residue of his force, in order to meet such ordnance, ordnance stores, and other supplies, as he had directed to be sent by water from Corpus Christi to Point Isabel, a few miles within the outlet into the Gulf at Brazos island. This point was about twenty miles distant from Matamoros. While there, he ordered another field-work to be thrown up, to become a depot on the Gulf for his army. Another detachment was made from his small force to garrison this work also, thus reducing his numbers to about two thousand three hundred men, with which he recommenced his march for the Rio Grande, on the 7th of May, 1846.

While occupied in this manner at Point Isabel, General Taylor heard that the Mexicans had crossed the river in force, and were no doubt between him and his field-work opposite Matamoros. When about to start, he addressed a letter to the Adjutant-General at Washington, in which he said, "if the enemy oppose my march, in whatever force, I shall fight him." This resolution, expressed with such simplicity and brevity, was taken at a time when no war had been declared, and he was on the brink of an encounter that would bring it into existence without any such formality. But he had no hesitation about his duty. It had been decided for him, that he occupied grounds he was to protect from aggression, especially to repel aggression actually made. He was permitted, with great propriety, to consider the initial step as having already been taken by the Mexicans, in their late capture, with bloodshed, of a squadron of his dragoons.

About midway between Point Isabel and the Rio Grande, the Mexicans were found arrayed across his path at Palo Alto. This was on the 8th of May. The enemy being all prepared, General Taylor made his preparations to accept the challenge thus gallantly offered. He made no reconnois-

sance of the enemy's numbers, as, "whatever his force," he was determined "to fight him." The grounds of Palo Alto are as smooth as a race course. There is not an inequality, within the range of the fight that took place there, where men in a standing posture are under shelter. Some slight undulations here and there would protect them lying down. The action began with artillery; and every ball thrown on either side raked the field without let or hinderance. A growth of chapparal, which skirted the position chosen by the Mexicans, enabled them to mask portions of their line; so that General Taylor felt bound to engage them with wariness, until they should more distinctly manifest their strength and intentions.

The sun went down, the evening of the 8th, upon the two parties with no great variation of their relative positions. Our light artillery had been managed with distinguished ability, and had evidently forced back one of the wings of the enemy with heavy loss; while an endeavor by his cavalry to turn our right flank had been repulsed by a regiment of infantry, some light artillery assisting. The troops of General Taylor lay down at night where the close of the day had left them, he spreading his blanket on the grass in a central position, where he slept until the morning, with only such interruptions as anxious reports about the enemy led others occasionally to make to him. As long as he saw, or heard of, no actual demonstrations of approach, he seemed to be satisfied that the Mexicans were as much worn down by the contest of the preceding day as his own troops, and, if not in retreat, were resting, like himself, the better to be prepared for the morrow. His sagacity suggested to him that an enemy who had fought so warily while the sun was shining, was little likely to have the boldness to make a night attack. He therefore slept on, and recommended others, who were not on guard, to do the same.

Early the next morning, rising from his soldierly bed, General Taylor had a reconnoissance made in front, which showed him that the enemy had withdrawn; whether to cross the Rio Grande, or only to take up a new position, was to be ascertained by a further reconnoissance. This intelligence gave him that insight into the character of his opponent which is so desirable in war. Thus far General Taylor had seen

no indications that gave him that insight. The boldness with which the river had been crossed, and the equal boldness with which his path had been beset, went far to prove the Mexican General a spirited and resolute commander. Hence, at the meeting the day before, General Taylor had acted with caution, holding his troops face to face with the hostile lines, and awaiting such movements as those lines might demonstrate. With strong reasons for supposing that the enemy fully doubled his own numbers, he could not safely approximate too closely his position, without endangering his flanks. Those weak points of his line had evidently been the object of such evolutions as were exhibited by the enemy during the day. It is probable that General Taylor's confidence in his own strength increased as the events of the day unfolded themselves, and that he laid down at night with a belief that his adversary had not the same encouraging sentiment. His discernment had detected sufficient evidences that his opponent closed the operations of the day with less assurance of ultimate victory than that with which he opened them. With these conclusions on his mind, General Taylor began his arrangements for the 9th.

With a view to know the position of the enemy, General Taylor directed an advance party of about 400 men, well selected both as to officers and men, to move forward on his trace, and send back information. In the mean time, the remaining troops prepared to follow, the baggage and supplies being left where they were, with a suitable guard, and with orders to throw up such field-works for their protection as the time would admit. These precautions being taken, the column set forward, considerably lessened, of course, by deaths, wounds, and detachments, but strengthened more than in proportion to these deductions by the cheering fact, that it was advancing, while its opponents were falling back.

The contest at Resaca de la Palma, which began about midday on the 9th of May, was much more animated in its character than the contest of the preceding day. The nature of the grounds, very closely covered for the most part by a chapparal growth, soon broke the regiments, and even the companies, into parties, many of them hardly numbering a corporal's guard. But the gallantry and force of

the attack were not diminished by this disjunction of the masses. They seemed rather to be augmented by it, like the bursting of a shell into fragments. The same cause had produced something like the same effect on the enemy. Maniple met maniple, as in ancient battles. Even individuals had many chances of measuring lances, as in those battles. The column had gone into the fight with an impulse that still kept onward the smallest parts of it. Nothing went back, nothing stood still. New ground was trod upon each minute, the enemy gradually giving way, our troops constantly advancing.

While this strife of companies, sections, and files was going on so bravely and successfully on either hand, the more central portion was the scene of conflicts, of surging to and fro of larger bodies of men, more immediately under the eye of General Taylor, that were watched with profound anxiety. The enemy had selected with much judgment for his stand this day the bank, somewhat elevated, of a ravine, occasionally the bed of running waters, now nearly dry, excepting some wet and miry spots on each side of the road which crossed it at that point. This road, as it crossed, made an abrupt turn, and a strong battery had been placed where it ascended the bank occupied by the Mexicans. This battery, General Taylor saw, was an obstacle in the way of victory that must be removed. The infantry could have turned it, had not the chapparal so much broken its ranks. To push forward a column into its mouth would have been murderous work. Cavalry alone could move with the required celerity, and a charge by that arm was ordered. A light battery, which was in advance of the squadrons, opened a fire upon the enemy's pieces, and drew forth a return.* The squadrons advanced with a rush while the pieces were reloading, and were upon them before the rammers had been withdrawn. The battery was won by the horse; but the enemy's foot in support of it poured in such a destructive fire from the thickets upon the victorious assail-

* When the gallant leader of this forlorn hope was about to begin his charge, the equally gallant officer in command of a light battery close at hand called out to his comrade, in the kindly familiarity of the camp, "stop, Charley, until I draw their fire;" immediately discharging his pieces, which were mostly under cover, and quickly receiving the fire of the enemy's battery in return.

ants, that it might have been lost again, had not our infantry come to the rescue.

This gallant dash decided the fortunes of the day. The Mexicans withdrew their broken forces with precipitation to the Rio Grande, a few miles distant, and, having the means for crossing at hand, were safely on the other side of that river the next morning. This precipitate retreat, however, had been made only by lightening himself of all burdens. He left his artillery, (no longer his at the moment of retreat,) his camp, his baggage, his mules, his stores, his wounded, all behind, and fled empty-handed. The tents were found all pitched, and the meals prepared, which refreshed, after the labors of the day, very different troops from those for whom the preparation had begun before the fight began. The small reserve which General Taylor had kept behind the fight was pushed forward, after the enemy had given way, with all urgency; but night settled down before his light and unencumbered column could be overtaken.*

While these consecutive combats were passing at Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma, another scene of warfare was going on near the Rio Grande, opposite Matamoras. The field-work which General Taylor, when he left that river not many days before, had directed to be thrown up, was still imperfect in its defences, notwithstanding the day and night toil of the troops selected to complete and to guard it. Its vicinity to the enemy made all movements on the other bank well known. The large bodies of troops which had crossed the river might, while a part of them endeavored to intercept General Taylor, send such a force against the unfinished work, rising so boldly in the face of Matamoras, as could easily overwhelm it. Fortunately, the efforts in this respect were confined to a cannonade and bombardment. This was kept up for more than 160 hours,—hours of great danger and extreme anxiety. The shells were soon sent with unerring certainty within the line of the breastwork, which had but a few hastily constructed shelters from them, as they fell and burst into fragments. And during the last two days, the garrison had distinctly heard the loud din of the battles that were raging, it knew not with what results, so near at hand.

* Brigadier General Taylor received the brevet rank of Major-General for his services at Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma.

Nor could it believe the precursors, who, at the close of that of the 9th, first gave the shout of victory and relief under its walls, fearing, amid the shadows of departing day, that the enemy might be deluding them into false security.

Here may be said to have concluded the campaign for which General Taylor, under his orders from Washington, had made preparation at Corpus Christi. That preparation was complete for the end in view. It went no farther. War had not then been declared; of course, no orders were, or could have been, given to do more than he had done. The Rio Grande was the limit of his operations. To that limit he pushed them rapidly and triumphantly. It is true, that, while his small army was passing to and fro between his two field-works, the one opposite Matamoros and the other at Point Isabel, the public, knowing that the Mexicans had crossed the river in large numbers, and were probably arrayed across his path, felt an apprehension that had in it more of fear than of hope. It did injustice both to the man and the men.

General Taylor, probably, at no time doubted the result. His troops were of the best kind, and in the best order. General Taylor knew he could rely on them, and they felt they could rely on him. The confidence was reciprocal, and it was a bond of strength that could not easily be broken. So events proved. The apprehension of the public for a short season only served as a cloud to set off the shining that followed. The double victory was hailed with rapture. The whole nation shouted with a great shout of exultation, and felt that the war, which had just been declared, and had opened so auspiciously, could not but close with success.

General Taylor was, perhaps, nearly the only man in the nation who, at this time of rejoicing, regarded his position with deep anxiety. He saw that his late triumphs had awakened in the public mind an expectation of other triumphs, which he had no means to achieve. Even the government, which should have judged with more discernment, seemed to share in the expectation, and, in communicating to him the declaration of war, which authorized him to cross the Rio Grande, and seek the enemy within his own borders, spoke as if it thought him all fitted for such a new, and far and wide, campaign. The government knew little of the Rio Grande, or the country beyond. The information picked up from

travels or travellers, on the spur of the moment, did not deserve the shadow of trust in such a grave matter. Here, then, at the Rio Grande, General Taylor should have stopped ; and there the government should not only have permitted, but directed him to stop, until a new preparation could be made for a new start, — a start to begin as that from Corpus Christi began.

There was much of accident about what was done on this occasion. Nothing seemed to be done with deliberation, and events contributed for a time to put deliberation out of the question. While General Taylor was thought to be in peril, oscillating between the Rio Grande and Point Isabel, a large amount of volunteer force was called, upon very short terms of service, to be urged forward to his rescue. Before any of this force had embarked, (detachments from New Orleans, perhaps, excepted,) that peril had vanished. All, however, were pushed on, as, war being now declared, if it were not needed for defensive purposes on this side the Rio Grande, it would answer for offensive purposes on the other side. Accordingly, volunteers in myriads were poured in upon General Taylor, who, bound down by circumstances at Matamoros, saw the inundation with regret and embarrassment.

General Taylor was not responsible for this outpouring. A greater part of it sprung from the zeal of the southwest, first, to fly to the relief of a small army supposed to be in great peril ; next, to fly to the scene of actual war, now open to all gallant spirits. The rush could not be stopped by the State authorities, even where they interposed to give it more system and preparation. And all that the General Government could then have done was, to direct the best use to be made of those troops whose terms of service allowed a sufficient stay in the field for future operations, and that all others should be turned back. It must have been known that nothing *could* be done at that time with any force under the command of General Taylor. The enemy was beyond his reach, and he had to await means of transportation to follow him. These means were not on the Rio Grande, and could not be there under some months. After the declaration of war, when operations beyond the Rio Grande could be looked to, due exertions were made to provide this transportation. This, however, was not the work of a week, or of a month.

The steamboats for the Rio Grande could be procured only on the Mississippi and its tributaries. These had to be sought out, fitted up, and caused to make a trip on the Gulf, for which they were wholly unsuited, and which, the chances were manifold, they could not make in safety. Many hundreds of wagons were wanting. These were to be purchased or made on the same rivers.

To expect the troops sent to General Taylor to move before these means were at hand would have been inconsiderate, if not absurd. Yet such seems to have been the case, and he set himself manfully to work through difficulties that amounted almost to impossibilities. He had applied, at once, the few means of transportation in his hands to the transfer of supplies from Point Isabel and the Brazos to Matamoros, preparatory to establishing a depot at Camargo, soon determined to be the best point of departure for Monterey, where, it had been intimated to him from Washington, it was hoped he would be before September. But all things ran counter. The rains had begun, and the Rio Grande soon overflowed its banks, and most of the level country on each side was flooded. The ravine at Resaca, in which General Taylor's troops had so lately stood shoulder to shoulder on dry ground, was now an unfordable arm of the river. Much of the grounds at Palo Alto, where he, with his troops, had lain down with at least the comfort of dryness, were now glistening in the sun with sheets of water. Nearly the whole route between Point Isabel and Matamoros, where his batteries had manœuvred with so much ease in the month of May, had become, by July, impassable for wheels. Had not a few small steamboats fortunately reached the Rio Grande before this interruption of the land route was consummated, this transfer must have been wholly suspended. Even with these steamboats it went on slowly. The Rio Grande, as it grew deep, grew strong, and soon became a torrent. The boats, which were weak in power of machinery, wrestled with it often in vain, and had to return whence they had started. Others overcame the difficulty slowly, and only with light loads.

With so much to be done, and with so little to do it with; urged on by the government, and goaded by the unreasonable expectations of the public; General Taylor most naturally became impatient, and resolved to begin his march for the

interior with such force as he could set in motion with due preparation, even if it fell far short of the complement he desired, and had stated to be necessary. That complement, he had stated, ought to be ten thousand men. The country through which he had to pass was well adapted to annoyance and defence. A few troops, it was well understood, could there operate successfully against many. Besides, Monterey was represented to be fortified with considerable strength, and the passes beyond, towards Saltillo, were known to be very formidable. The force then on the Rio Grande could not furnish that complement, and leave the river fully guarded. Only six thousand of them could be moved. Availing himself of all the means of transportation the enemy's country, within reach, put at his command, and putting in requisition all his other means, still Gen. Taylor found himself limited to that minimum of force.

Early in September, 1846, General Taylor left the Rio Grande at Camargo, and began his march for the Sierra Madre. The enemy made no use of the extraordinary advantages for annoyance and defence presented by the route. He left the way clear, as if he designed to allure the invaders to the Sierra Madre, where, far from their resources, the chances of cutting them off were greatly multiplied. The means of transportation afforded no room for forage, and all the animals had to depend upon the country for feed. This dependence was seldom sure. Most of the route was over an arid desert. On the running streams, where there could be irrigation, there was cultivation; nowhere else. It was the season of corn in the silk. The fields of this fodder within reach were appropriated to our use without hesitation, but with proper recompense, determined by ourselves. Fortunately, no animals failed through want, and Monterey was reached the 19th of the same month.

During this march, General Taylor was habitually near the head of his column. Many reports relative to the enemy were continually reaching his ears; but the column went steadily on, and met with no obstructions. General Taylor seemed to feel little anxiety to know the precise condition of Monterey, the strength of its defences, or the probable number of defenders. Whatever these proved to be, his intention was the same, — that is, to attack them. *How to attack*

them was to be determined when he saw the place. His common remark was, that he distrusted what he did not see at the head of his column. He believed when he saw; and he did not deem it necessary to determine in advance of sight. Accordingly, as soon as his column approached Monterey, he rode forward with his staff to the plain spread along the westerly side of it, and there leisurely looked over the whole ground. The city itself was somewhat sunk, on the bank of the San Juan, out of view, showing only its cupolas and other eminent objects. But the heights overlooking it were all in full view; that on which stood the Bishop's Palace, (so called,) converted into a strong castle, and other contiguous and subordinate ridges, all commanding the city; and a still more lofty offset of the Sierra Madre, which ran along the entire rear of it, seemingly also to command it. Rising high above all these elevations appeared the Sierra Madre, like a stupendous wall that shut out the light of the sun from the plain beneath at mid-afternoon. The sight was truly magnificent, and those who beheld it almost forgot that they were probably enjoying it within reach of the enemy's guns. The lapse of a short time proved that such was the case.

After having made such a survey of the scene as gave him a general idea of the relations of the place, and would enable him the better to comprehend the more particular reconnoissances then going on by the proper subordinate officers, General Taylor turned with his small party towards a thicket on the left, which had been recommended as a suitable place for encampment, being nearer the city than that of "Walnut Springs." All reports had concurred in fixing a heavy battery, or fort, on the plain where General Taylor had been standing. A slight undulation of the surface masked it from his position. Just as he turned to change that position, first a smoke, then a shot, revealed the truth. Some four or five discharges of artillery were made in quick succession, having the group for their object, before the danger was lost in the increasing distance.* The first shot

* Many anecdotes have been related to show General Taylor's contempt of danger; most of them showing the mere coxcombry of bravery. In this case, finding his life, as well as the lives of all near him, in danger, and that the risk was useless, he spurred his horse rapidly out of the range of fire, all others following him as fast as they could. He had no fear of being thought fearful, when not

struck the earth a few yards within the party, bounding, by a ricochet, just over the heads of those who composed it. The other shots missed their mark in the same manner. Only a little more elevation was wanting to the aim in order to have inflicted a severe stroke upon the opening fortunes of the campaign. As it was, the incident only served to reveal the exact position of an important work, and the better to guide the movements made on the same plain the following days.

Walnut Springs having been decided upon as the encampment of the army during the operations against Monterey, General Taylor there marked out, without farther delay, the mode in which they should be commenced. One of the divisions, under the command of General Worth, was to move, early the next morning (20th), around to that portion of the rear of the city which looked towards the gorge through the Sierra Madre leading to Saltillo. The building called the Bishop's Palace, crowning the slope of the principal height in that direction, was to be carried, as well as the smaller works observed on another less elevated ridge, more to the rear. The 20th would necessarily be mostly taken up by this movement, and the residue of the army was to rest inactive, until the possession of those heights on the ensuing morning should point out the proper time for a general coöperation.

On the evening of the 20th, General Worth reported that he had reached his position, and should assail the designated heights the next morning, the 21st. General Taylor accordingly led out the residue of his troops that morning, each portion being at its appointed station on the plain between the camp and the city by the break of day. A bomb battery (of one mortar) had been established during the night, under cover of one of the slight undulations before alluded to, which, in conjunction with two howitzers, was to open, at the signal given, upon the fort which betrayed itself the afternoon of the 19th, as well as on the city. That signal was to be given as soon as demonstrations were seen that the Bishop's Palace had

to have been fearful would have been foolhardiness. On a subsequent day of the siege, he is said to have paused, under a galling fire, on a bridge in the city, and taken out his spy-glass and reconnoitred the place whence the fire came. General Taylor never carried a spy-glass, and it is doubtful whether he looked through one during the campaign.

been taken. The height on which it stood had been carried at daybreak, but the palace did not yield until a much later hour. In the mean time, the fort on the plain, also another work in the southerly part of the city, opened their fire upon every part of the broad level there, severely breaking in upon the troops which were moving, or resting, upon it in different parts; and General Taylor, observing that a feeling of discouragement was likely to pervade the volunteers under such circumstances, ordered the mortar and howitzers to begin their work, and the columns to advance upon the city according to directions previously given. Then the assault began on the westerly side, and soon became general.

A reconnoissance made during the night of the 19th, from the high ridge running under the Sierra Madre, in the rear of Monterey, had disclosed somewhat distinctly the manner in which the fortifications of the place had been made. Under a belief that the advance of the Americans would be by another route, which would have made the approach from the south, that portion of the city had been strengthened by a system of batteries, that closed upon each other almost like the scales of a fish. This system was terminated on the southwestern angle by a more prominent and still stronger work, whose open gorge was protected by a stone tannery immediately in its rear. Between this work, and the large fort on the plain, the city was nearly open, that is, without any exterior batteries, though (as was found afterwards) strongly barricaded within. To this weak part General Taylor directed the main effort to be made by his columns, the work at the angle being approached at the same time.

The columns advanced under the fire of the two forts, whose shot, intersecting each other, raked the plain over which they passed from right to left. One of the brigades of infantry, which entered the streets of the city with imprudent gallantry, met a destructive fire from every house and high wall, all of stone, that obliged it to fall back after a severe loss, particularly of officers. A portion of it, however, which had made a lodgement on the flat roof of a large building that looked towards the gorge of the fort at the angle, and was within effective musketry reach of it, happily coöperating with its fire with the advance of some regiments of volunteers in front, induced the enemy to abandon it with precipitation,

leaving its armament behind. This important acquisition was regarded by General Taylor as securing the conquest of the place. He had evidence that General Worth's operations at the other side of the city had gained a dominant lodgement in that quarter. The possession of this fort at the other side was a double advantage, that must render all subsequent defence of the city twofold in its difficulties and dangers.

The day of the 21st, so full of gallant and successful operations on both sides of the city, closed with a cold rain storm, in character with the season, for it was the equinox. While the important gains achieved by General Worth, cutting off the route for retreat of the enemy to the rear, and placing his command on various heights that overhung the city, cost the army comparatively little loss, the operations immediately under the eye of General Taylor strewed the plain with killed and wounded, many of the latter being necessarily left to abide, during the night, the pelting of the storm. The active operations in that quarter only closed with the day, when night shut in with a darkness that shrouded all things too deeply to find out those who still lay where they fell.

During this eventful day, General Taylor went into the heat of the fire at an early hour, and was at no time out of it, until, by common consent, as the sun went down, and the rains descended, both parties paused in exhaustion. His duties, he considered, left him no choice of position. The uncertainty as to details in the enemy's occupation and mode of defence was such, that no judgment could safely be formed of them but by actual observation and experiment. It was necessary that he should make these observations himself, and that he should see these experiments; that he should be at all times at hand, in order to seize advantages, and rectify errors, with promptitude. He had to work with many troops who were new in the face of an enemy. They looked to him for countenance and example. He gave them both. Besides, the capture of the fort at the angle of the city brought with it great anxiety. Its loss opened a train of consequences to the enemy that must end, unless timely checked, in his ruin. To recover it would seem to be an object likely to call forth all his efforts. These efforts were looked for throughout the day, and were particularly apprehended during the night. Many even suggested that the few troops who could be

crowded into it in order to guard it should be withdrawn at evening, as they might, if kept there, be considered as almost devoted to capture. General Taylor would listen to no suggestion that might lead to such an abandonment. The moment the fall of this fort was reported to him, early in the day, his eye lighted up with hope and exultation, and he instantly and emphatically declared his intention to hold fast to it. The Bishop's Palace on one side, and this fort on the other, he regarded as giving him a power of inward pressure, that would soon constrain all within to surrender.

Early the next morning, the wounded and the dead were collected, the former to be cared for, the latter to be consigned to the earth which had been so freely moistened by their blood. At the same time, preparations were made to pursue the advantages gained the day before. General Worth had reported that his division would begin its operations with the light. The other divisions were to be in readiness for operations on the other side of the city at the same time. Accordingly, with the dawn the storming of Monterey was renewed. The structure of the city made this storming a work of tediousness and peril. The narrow streets were barricaded by stone walls, and the houses, generally one story high, with a flat roof and with battlements, and built with thick walls of stone, had readily been converted into so many castles of defence. Gardens, with high stone walls, were attached to most of the houses. Carrying one of these houses, or gardens, was only one step gained. This was done, not so much by open assault, which would have cost too many lives, but by the pickaxe, which breached the walls in parts least exposed to fire. As our parties appeared through these breaches, the enemy soon disappeared. Thus ground was gradually and steadily won.

In the mean time, our light artillery — that powerful and brilliant arm — exhibited its efficiency under a new phasis. Its ordinary sphere is the broad field, where its sweeping evolutions can display themselves in all their breadth and rapidity. At this time, it was pushed into narrow streets, and there stood crowded among houses, like tigers ready to spring upon their prey. The noble animals which gave the pieces wings in the common battle, were here detached, and sheltered among the high walls; though even there, too often the mark

of covert shots. The pieces, behind some quoin of vantage, were loaded, hastily thrust forward into the street, whose range opened upon the enemy, and then let loose their contents to batter, break down, or blow up, (for they discharged shells as well as round shot,) whatever stood in their way. In this manner, the two parties of the Americans, widely separated in the morning, began to approximate each other, as they occupied house after house, plaza after plaza, until the enemy found his position, as the night drew on, narrowed down to a comparative span. Indeed, those who, from the outskirts of the city, could overlook the progress made from the two sides, so distinctly marked by the volumes of smoke that rose after the discharge of each piece of artillery, began to fear that its shots would overpass the enemy, and fall among the ranks of friends. Under an apprehension of that kind, General Taylor, towards the decline of day, ordered the troops on the south side to pause where they were, until he could learn more clearly the advance made in the opposite direction. The report from General Worth, that he was pushing on with success, and hoped soon to reach the main plaza, did not reach General Taylor until a partial withdrawal had been made of the troops under his immediate eye. Affairs were therefore permitted to rest as they were for this night, which was undisturbed excepting by reverberations of the mortar, now planted where it worked with sure and destructive effect.

The condition of the enemy was now apparently desperate. He had already besought General Taylor, to permit the women and children to withdraw, who, through confidence in better fortunes, had been kept there to brave the siege. Under the circumstances then existing, General Taylor did not deem himself called upon to yield to this appeal. The relief of the sufferers could be attained by a surrender, then fully authorized by the desperate condition of the place. The withdrawal of the non-combatants would only diminish the slaughter; it could not add to the force which still kept up the defence. The laws of war warranted this refusal, and a sense, perhaps a stern sense, of duty also required it. Humanity would have led to an earlier disposition of this part of the population. The events of the first day sufficiently demonstrated the peril they encountered by staying within the city. They could then have gone forth. As they did not,

they chose to abide the consequences, which, lamentable as they proved to be, were only such as might have been, and must have been, anticipated.

During the night of the 22d, the work of destruction went harshly on. Our mortar (as we have already observed) played on through the darkness, having, while it was still light, marked well its range, the main object being a conspicuous church on the main Plaza, known to have been converted into a magazine, and containing most of the ammunition gathered up for the siege. With such knowledge, the church became a legitimate object for our shells. Before midnight, one shell ended its parabola by chipping out a piece from the bell of the church, exploding at the base of the belfry. A slight variation on one side of its direction, would have sent it into the body of the building, with consequences that might alarm the stoutest heart. The hazard was not lost upon the Mexican commander, who, it is said, was at that time holding his head-quarters in one of the vestries of the church. Whether it was this approximation of the hazard to his person, or a belief that further resistance was vain, that suggested a parley, cannot be known; but a parley was asked with General Taylor by a messenger, who left the Mexican head-quarters about the hour of midnight.

A suspension of hostilities followed this message, General Taylor having signified his readiness to meet General Ampudia within the city the next day, in order to treat of a surrender of men and arms, with the usual honors of war, the former to be paroled. This meeting took place the morning of the 23d, just without the line in the city occupied by General Worth's division.* The council was opened by General Ampudia, a clear and graceful speaker, who, after a preliminary suited to the occasion, asked what terms could be obtained as a basis of surrender of his command. The answer of General Taylor was, briefly, that the terms embraced a surrender of men and arms, according to the usual forms in such cases. No doubt, he went into the council with a determination to

* As General Taylor alighted from his horse at the door of the house where the council was to be held, he was met by one of the Mexican Generals, who, after the manner of his country, opened his arms to embrace him, instead of offering his hand. Such a new and unexpected mode of salutation produced much surprise, and considerable embarrassment, and caused a general smile among the spectators.

adhere to these terms. He had no good reason to doubt his ability to enforce them in due time, provided the defence continued, the advantages he had gained during the last two days justifying this confidence. The remarks of General Ampudia in reply to the answer to his question, probably led him to think a modification might be expedient. Those remarks were made with moderation, and in a seemingly conciliatory spirit. He said that General Santa Anna had just returned to his country, and manifested a desire for pacification. He had been aloof when the contest between the two countries began, and could act in the case with much impartiality. He could be just to the Mexicans, and at the same time act with liberality towards the United States. The character of the surrender of Monterey might have an important bearing on the work of pacification. Harsh terms would most naturally exasperate, while generous terms would as naturally conciliate. These temperate and specious remarks were followed by a proposal to select and commission some from the officers then present on both sides, to digest the terms of surrender.

Before General Taylor left the Rio Grande, he was informed, semi-officially, perhaps officially, that our government intended to permit General Santa Anna (then an exile) to reënter Mexico; that it intended even to aid his return. This step was taken, of course, under a belief that, as he was opposed to the rulers then in power, he was likewise opposed to their policy. The result of this reasoning was, that the introduction of this distinguished chief into Mexico would lead to a party in favor of peace, or, at the least, to a conflict of parties, whose quarrel would weaken the energies of war. In this council at Monterey, General Taylor was officially informed that General Santa Anna had actually returned to his country, and had expressed a desire for an honorable adjustment between the contending nations. This information induced him to listen to the suggestions from time to time made by the commission, giving to the surrender rather more liberality of character. When it was found that one step of concession had been admitted, an importunate spirit began to manifest itself on the part of the Mexicans. General Taylor cut this short suddenly, after he had conceded all he deemed proper, by withdrawing within his own lines, and stating a precise hour in advance, when hostilities would re-commence, should

the terms he offered he declined. They were accepted within the hour specified, and the surrender and evacuation of Monterey took place, according to stipulation, the following day.*

This surrender was made, at the time, the subject of animadversion. The foregoing remarks will probably satisfy those who have not already come to satisfactory conclusions by reading the official reports put forth at the time, that General Taylor had reasons of public policy to justify the course he took. The way of escape was open to the garrison, on one side of the city, to the last moment of the defence. All but the artillery could move out and move off. No terms, therefore, could have secured the men or the small arms of the enemy. Those granted gave up only a small portion of his field artillery. Besides, the suspension of operations granted within certain limits gave rise to no delay that must not have occurred even without that suspension. General Taylor, through the limited quantity of means of transportation he had been able to collect before he left the Rio Grande, had been able to bring with him only a limited supply of provisions and ammunition. The former was rapidly diminishing. Had further operations been free from any check by an armistice, they must have been stayed by other causes. As the event proved, when operations recommenced, under the orders of the government, a few days only before the armistice would have expired of itself, General Taylor's forces were but just refitted for active service. No time had been lost. Much facility, however, had been gained in moving up supplies through the interior. The trains passed to and fro without loss or molestation. When the guerilla parties were let loose upon them by a renewal of hostilities, it was far otherwise.

At no moment during this interval of arms was General

* General Taylor left the camp at Walnut Springs early in the morning, and did not return to it until near midnight. During this time, he had had no communication with the camp. When, at 11 p. m., he started from Monterey, wearied out by the protracted negotiations of the day, he put his horse, notwithstanding the darkness of the night, and the badness and blindness of the road, upon a round amble, which kept all who were in his suite, some fifty or more, upon a full gallop. As he neared the camp, the party passed over a rocky ridge, which sent forth a sound as of the trampling of thousands. The camp was alarmed, and all the troops were ordered out and under arms on the seemingly threatened side. Fortunately, a suggestion was made that the party might be that of General Taylor, and it was not fired upon, so that he reached the camp in safety.

Taylor inactive. At no moment did he relax his exertions to prepare for a recommencement of the contest. For a brief period, he had a hope that, through General Santa Anna's influence, a peace might be made. This hope did not continue long. That astute chieftain soon saw that the war was popular with his countrymen, and he did not hesitate for one moment to side with the popular opinion. He well knew that whatever obligations were upon him to act otherwise could not be brought to light. As soon as movements were again authorized, General Taylor was in readiness to make them. His plans had already been formed. General Worth was sent up with a division to Saltillo, and occupied it without opposition. General Wool was moving down in the mean time from Monclova towards the same point. General Taylor himself, with a body of about 4,000 men was to move down under the Sierra Madre to Victoria. This last movement was to fulfil arrangements making for a descent on Mexico through an avenue more to the south. General Taylor had corresponded with the government on this subject. His opinion had been asked respecting it, and he was requested to afford such coöperation as would be consistent with a preservation of the country already acquired by him. The column with which he moved on Victoria, towards the close of the year 1846, was the amount of this coöperation he deemed his forces near and above Monterey could afford. Other troops were in motion from the Rio Grande for the same purpose, to meet him at Victoria.

While on this march, about sixty miles south of Monterey, General Taylor was overtaken by an express from General Worth at Saltillo, stating that a large force under General Santa Anna was immediately threatening that position. An immediate countermarch with a part of his column took place, though his own information of the Mexican movements led him to doubt whether the reports which had reached Saltillo were well founded. When General Taylor had repassed Monterey a few miles, further reports from General Worth showed that such was the fact. Retracing his steps, General Taylor reached Victoria in due time. It was there that he was made acquainted, in part, with the plan of General Scott's proposed campaign, and to what extent his

forces were to be diminished in consequence.* With only such a body of troops as made his return to Monterey safe, he again marched upon that place, learning on the route that a special messenger,† having despatches from General Scott, giving him that General's further plans in detail, had been murdered, and the despatches taken. He knew that this mischance must fully instruct the Mexican chief, who was now said to be in large force at San Luis de Potosi, in all these plans, and had reason to believe that this information even preceded his own knowledge of the mischance. It therefore behoved him to regain his positions on his old line with all diligence, as his dangers seemed to be increasing as his forces there were diminishing.

When General Taylor reached Monterey, he found that most of his regular troops had already passed through that place on their way to the Rio Grande; other troops, including volunteers, being under orders to follow. General Wool had taken the place of General Worth at Saltillo, regarding his position as threatened from San Luis de Potosi. General Taylor, from his encampment near Monterey, looked with anxiety to this salient point, but believed he must await the further development of events, before he could decide as to further movements. The position of General Santa Anna was commanding. He now knew the designs of General Scott, could calculate the time required to begin them, and could determine what might be done on the Monterey line, before he looked to that of Vera Cruz. All this General Taylor bore in mind, and was forced to await, as we have remarked, the further development of events, to judge of General Santa Anna's intentions; that is, whether he intended to strike at Saltillo, or descend upon the plains below by other routes, open to him, and threaten our communications with

* There was a question between the two distinguished chiefs of the Mexican campaigns, arising out of this withdrawal of force from General Taylor's line. It cannot even be stated in a brief note. We feel assured, however, that the public does not wish to see it settled, if its settlement serve to convict either of them of intentional injustice. There may have been misapprehensions on one side, and harsh feelings on the other; but these were spots which few, or none, have discovered amid the blaze of their achievements.

† The young and inexperienced subaltern who had charge of these important despatches, was sent from Monterey on his important errand with about ten men as an escort. A squadron of mounted volunteers which followed on his footsteps was too late to prevent the catastrophe that cost the life of the officer and the loss of his despatches. Had it accompanied him, no doubt both would have been saved.

the Rio Grande ; or whether he would decide to move at once upon the south, to meet the new and formidable menace in that quarter. General Taylor probably thought the latter course most likely to be taken. To protect Vera Cruz in due time, and repulse the invasion approaching it on the threshold, seemed so obviously prudent and eligible, that he could hardly doubt the choice to be made. Still, he had to await the issue. Monterey was central as to the exposed points. He was couched there, to spring whichever way the prey should show itself.

In this state of uncertainty, and believing that he was likely soon to lapse into a state of inactive defensive warfare, while an energetic and teeming campaign would be reviving the memory of the campaign of Cortes on another route, reports were brought to General Taylor of two small affairs in advance of Saltillo, which, like the small cloud as big as a man's hand, was destined soon to spread into a tempest. These small affairs strongly intimated to him that the Mexicans were resolved, before they looked to Vera Cruz, and met the new invaders there, to make a sudden and bold assault upon those already far within their borders, and who, though formidable in reputation for three triumphs over their arms, now appeared so reduced and segregated, as to give a promise of success to any such assault. Under these convictions, General Taylor, after arranging the defence of Monterey, and providing for his communications with the Rio Grande in the best manner his force would admit, moved up rapidly upon Saltillo, and, after a day or two, occupied, with nearly all his troops, a position some twenty miles in advance of that place, known as Agua Nueva.

The two small events to which we have alluded were the capture, by the enemy, of two detachments of mounted volunteers, about fifty miles in advance of Saltillo. These detachments had been sent out on the routes leading to San Luis de Potosi, and, during a night of incautious negligence, were surrounded by superior numbers, and, after a parley, had surrendered. One man escaped to report the misfortune. Discouragement and mortification seemed to follow this capture ; and General Taylor saw that decisive and confident measures must be taken without delay to remove those feelings, which, among volunteers (his main force,) were likely to

unnerve all efficiency. He did not deem it sufficient to make a stand at Saltillo ; he determined to throw himself forward to the most prominent position, which had as yet been occupied by our troops. Agua Nueva was that position. His information made him regard a stand there as having many positive advantages. Just beyond that place, a march of nearly two days stretched over a plain that afforded no water. General Taylor knew this could not be crossed by an army of the size then under General Santa Anna, without an exhaustion that would considerably reduce the value of his great numbers, and enable a weak opponent, fresh from rest and strong in supplies, to meet him upon terms that might not be too unequal. A reconnoissance of the grounds that terminated the weary and debilitating march over the desert, showed that their defensive and offensive qualities were highly favorable ; and there the shock was to be received, it being now well-known that the Mexicans had left San Luis, and were marching towards Saltillo.

The position occupied by General Taylor's army at Agua Nueva was strikingly peculiar and picturesque. The encampment spread over a plain, about seven or eight miles in width, almost as level as the surface of water, hemmed in on every side by peaked mountains, rising quite abruptly in irregular and cone-shaped masses to the height of many thousand feet, shutting in, as it were, the multitude gathered there to abide its fate. The inlet by which this multitude had entered was closed to the eye. Through the effect of a most sensitive reverberation all around, the sound of voices that rose up from the camp, (for volunteers, unlike regulars, whom discipline subdues into habitual quiet, are vociferous and restless,) struck on the ear with strange distinctness. It was a time of intense expectation, and minds unused to such trials sought relief in agitation and excitement. Reconnoissances were constantly abroad during those days of suspense. Their reports showed that advance parties were daily approximating our positions, and began to throw a doubt over his main design. Saltillo was unequivocally threatened by a strong column, and it was now ascertained that, contrary to the common report, there were avenues between the mountains rearward of Agua Nueva, by which more such columns could interpose themselves between that place and Saltillo. General Taylor

looked anxiously to these avenues, and, although he had, on the 20th instant, sufficient evidence that General Santa Anna was advancing in force upon his front, yet, the liability that now presented itself, of having his position turned, and thus placing him with threatenings in front, in his rear, and against Saltillo, the depot in that quarter of his army, constrained him to fall back without delay.*

This was a moment of severe trial. Retrograde movements have a double consequence; they give spirit to those before whom they are made, while they take away spirit from those by whom they are made. Especially was the retrograde movement now about to be made likely to affect unfavorably the volunteer troops, which composed the major part of General Taylor's force. His bold advance towards the enemy when Agua Nueva was occupied, inspired them with confidence, because it bespoke confidence in himself. Having no experience in campaigning, they thought as he appeared to think. General Taylor knew all this; he knew that he hazarded, by this change of position, the loss of that trust in his sufficiency for all emergencies which forms the nerve and soul of a volunteer army. Yet he hesitated not a moment. At midnight his scouts came in, and he saw the necessity of the change; and the camp was broken up the next day at noon.

Under a belief that Agua Nueva would be longer occupied, General Taylor had had large supplies collected there. These supplies could not be removed as easily as the troops. It was necessary to destroy a part, or leave a strong guard behind, until the train, having once been to Saltillo with a load, could return. To adopt the first measure would bespeak precipitation; the latter measure therefore was adopted, which might succeed if the enemy kept aloof. The army moved at the hour appointed. Most of the column had filed off before General Taylor mounted. He said little, was grave, and even stern of countenance. As he rode slowly by the flank of the column, he scarcely seemed to observe the silent ranks, which, as he came into view, turned with an anxious look of inquiry upon him, as if to read the expression of his coun-

*During the short stay of General Taylor at this time at Agua Nueva, the temperature of the weather was freezing, much aggravated by high and eddying winds. Thick ice formed every night. When the line took up its retrograde march, every man looked dirty, uncomfortable, and savage. Much the same temperature prevailed throughout February.

tenance. Not a shade of doubt or misgiving was there, and each beholder seemed to satisfy himself that the purpose of meeting the enemy was still unshaken, and marched on in better heart, willing to leave to him the time and place of that meeting.

When General Taylor moved forward to Agua Nueva, his column passed through a narrow defile, formed by a precipitous height, some eighty feet high, on one side, and deep gullies on the other. This height was almost inaccessible, and the gullies were impassable for horse and artillery, and even for men, without much labor in preparing the way. It was obvious to every eye, that this was a place where a few could stand against many. As, however, its defensive capability depended upon the feasibility of turning the flank that might be towards the mountains on the south, of which General Taylor had then no satisfactory information, he made only a passing remark upon its seemingly Thermopylæ-like character. On his march back, revolving in his mind the choice of positions where a stand should be made, this formidable looking pass presented itself for consideration. His inquiry of those who had been encamped in that neighborhood was, whether, in case he selected that position, his left flank could be turned? The answer was, that a deep ravine ran from the road to the mountain, which no artillery nor cavalry could cross; and he directed the halt to be made at that pass, (Angostura.) By this decision he lost the aid of a field battery, and one of his best battalions of volunteers, which were then at Saltillo, and were necessary for the defence of that place, an important depot of supplies; while he had reason to suppose he gained a strength in position that more than counterbalanced this loss. Leaving the main body of the troops to take post there under General Wool, the second in command, General Taylor moved on, with a small escort, to Saltillo, to make arrangements for the defence of that place, known to be threatened by a strong column of the enemy's cavalry, which approached it by a pass opening into the valley below.

Early in the forenoon of the next day, (the 22d of February, 1847,) General Wool reported to General Taylor that the enemy's columns were seen approaching from Agua Nueva. General Taylor returned to the position occupied by the troops, about three miles in advance of a hacienda, bearing

the name of Buena Vista. A judicious disposition of the troops had been made by General Wool, suited to the character of the grounds, and the strength of the command. The pass of Angostura was occupied by a light battery, with detachments of volunteer foot to sustain it. This was the key of the position. The broad plain or plateau above, which stretched to the base of the mountains, some two thousand yards distant from that pass, and which was intersected by deep ravines stretching in the same direction, at about right angles with the road, was occupied by other volunteers and artillery. A regiment of volunteer mounted riflemen, having dismounted, was at the base of the mountains, ready to scramble up its steep sides, should any light troops of the enemy make demonstrations in that quarter.

By 11 o'clock, A. M., a cloud of dust, (it had not rained for many months in that region,) rising high in the still atmosphere, and marking by its sinuous line the approaching columns, showed that the hour of conflict was drawing nigh. The enemy advanced with boldness, and with some degree of rapidity, as he probably then thought his antagonist was disposed to avoid this conflict. Such a thought had naturally been suggested by the manner in which the rear detachment, left at Agua Nueva the day before, to see to the removal of the supplies still in deposit there, had abandoned that place. While the return wagons were arriving and reloading, according to orders from head-quarters, a report spread among the troops and drivers there, that the enemy was upon them. The drivers cut the mules out of harness, and fled upon them with precipitation. The troops followed, having set fire to some of the supplies. A small advance of the enemy soon occupied the hacienda which had been so hastily evacuated, finding considerable prey there, and many signs of an abandonment made under a general panic. As he could not determine the extent of this panic, he concluded, with some reason, that it had embraced more than the rear-guard, and pushed on in eager pursuit, as after a flying game. When his leading column found, on reaching the vicinity of the pass of Angostura, that a stand seemed to be making there by General Taylor, that column came to a stand also, the sequent columns spreading out, as they came on, over the undulations in advance of another hacienda near, called *La Encantada*.

General Taylor, after surveying the grounds, and the dispositions made to defend them, and making such suggestions as he deemed proper, took his stand near Washington's battery, which was to wedge up the pass of Angostura. While in the saddle there, quietly awaiting the development of the enemy's designs, and observing the gradual accumulation of his masses near Encantada, the cloud of dust still tracing out to even distant eyes their progress, a messenger was seen hastily approaching our outposts. The messenger was halted there, but the message came in to General Taylor. When opened, it was found to be a summons to surrender, stating that more than twenty thousand Mexicans were then in his front or rear. When the numbers of the enemy were stated, General Taylor remarked that "twice that number would have made no difference." But even these words of confidence were not used in the answer. His Adjutant-General, dismounting at his side, wrote, at his dictation, in pencil, on the crown of his forage cap, the simple and brief reply which is so well known, — "I decline acceding to your proposal."

The spectators of this scene, being the staff of General Taylor, most of the officers of rank who were to bear important parts in the coming encounter, and some of the troops, regarded it in respectful, though anxious silence. Probably not an eye was turned away from the countenance, on whose expression so much seemed to depend. The haughty message worked no change in the gravity then so habitual there. Neither a swell nor a sinking of the heart appeared; no swell of feeling, that would vent itself in an answer of indignant defiance; no sinking of feeling, that showed that the weight of circumstances was becoming too heavy to be borne. The summons was considered as an ordinary expedient of an enemy, strong in numbers, and desirous of ascertaining how far those numbers would press, as a moral weight, upon his opponent. General Taylor would have had no objections to allowing the messenger to bring the message to his side. He had nothing to conceal. His numbers were probably well enough known by General Santa Anna, and the numbers of that General were well enough known by General Taylor. The summons, if it disclosed any thing new, disclosed an encouraging fact, that those numbers did not come up to what all reports had represented

them to be. As soon as it was answered, it seemed to be dismissed from thought. General Taylor resumed his observations of the movements of the enemy, as if no incident had suspended them for a short time.

The 22d had no fighting. A few round shots were discharged by the enemy at some rather obtrusive advance parties; and as the shadows of evening settled on the sides of the mountains, the light troops of both parties met there, and continued to skirmish until the darkness of the night showed distinctly the blaze of each rifle. Early in the afternoon, while General Taylor was still watching the progress of events on the low level near Washington's battery, several mounted persons of the enemy were seen to take a position on the crest of one of the ridges about midway between Angostura and Encantada, whose numbers were increased to some fifteen or sixteen. They stood there, strongly relieved by the clear sky beyond, and loomed up to the eye below in greatly exaggerated magnitude. The group, which was supposed to embrace General Santa Anna and his staff, stood immovably there, as if minutely examining the positions taken by his opponent, so weak in force, but so strong in those positions. The examination continued, until interrupted by a few horsemen, mostly volunteers, who scouted, under cover of the deep gorges there, into such daring proximity with the group, as to bring it within probable reach of their rifles.

As the sun set upon this magnificent scene, General Taylor rode up to the plateau above, and took his stand there, overlooking not only his own positions, but those of the enemy. The view could stretch far back (some ten miles) upon the road from Agua Nueva, where the tell-tale cloud of dust told that still the columns were coming onwards; while nearer at hand, on the levels of Encantada, regiment after regiment, lancers, dragoons, foot, and artillery, was paraded in regular lines, from the road to the base of the mountains, then sending forth their martial music that marked the hour of "retreat." This handsome and wide-spreading parade of force on the part of the Mexicans, and this pleasant observance of all the forms of the hour, as if on a common holiday occasion, contrasted strongly with the moody silence of our broken lines, perched in detachments on heights here and there, or ensconced in favoring breaks of the grounds, mostly with-

drawn from the enemy's eye. Soon after sunset, General Taylor, concluding from his observations that no attack would be made before the morning, returned to Saltillo, there to finish his arrangements for the defence of that important depot, equally threatened as the camp in advance of Buena Vista.

Early the next morning, (the 23d of February,) as had been anticipated, the enemy advanced upon nearly all the outer positions occupied by General Wool during the night. The column that moved on the pass of Angostura had been given an impetus proportioned to the importance of the object in view. That pass forced, the day was won. His column came on with confidence, but soon fell back in confusion and with loss before the battery that guarded it. Above, the enemy was more successful. A brigade of volunteer foot, with three pieces of light artillery, was in advance on the plateau there, and approximated too nearly the Mexican lines, when, severely galled by a fire from horse, foot, and artillery, overwhelming in numbers, it gave way, leaving one of the pieces of artillery behind.* As this retrograde took place, General Taylor came into the field of action. The troops which crowned the elevations near the pass, having seen the breach made by the enemy in one part of our line, and observing at the same moment the approach of General Taylor, cheered him with loud shouts. He at once ascended the plateau, whence he could have a view of the whole ground. He there met the battery section which had fallen back with the brigade before alluded to, and saw the brigade itself filing, with rapidity and confusion, off the plateau and out of the range of fire. The artillery came to a stand near General Taylor, who despatched members of his staff to rally the fugitives on the Mississippi regiment, which he had previously directed to take ground near the base of the mountains, on another plateau, next to that on which he then stood.

From the elevated position he had chosen, General Taylor overlooked the whole field of operations, except the pass of Angostura, which was covered by the bold steeps of the plateau. He had sufficient evidence, however, as he went into the action, that all was safe in that important quarter. The

* This was a four-pounder which had been captured from the Mexicans by the Texans, — perhaps at San Jacinto.

battery was heard in loud and rapid play, sending up its columns of smoke into full view from above. The retiring troops first engaged his attention; but soon seeing that they must be considered as deducted from his fighting force for the remainder of the day, he seemed to dismiss them from his thoughts, and to turn his attention to troops which still remained available for the conflict before him. As he looked around, he saw three regiments still at their positions, and that his light artillery (excepting the loss just mentioned) and dragoons were there in their fulness of power and spirit. Without counting the loss that had been sustained, he looked only to the means yet at his command. With these it was evident he had much to do. His left flank had been turned, by cavalry as well as by infantry. The deep ravine, on whose depth and precipitous sides so much reliance had been placed by those who had previously examined the ground, had been crossed by the former. Large masses of Mexican cavalry were seen skirting the base of the mountains, which were joined by their light troops that had been skirmishing on the sides of these mountains, now abandoned by our own light troops. Whether artillery could also surmount this obstacle, remained to be seen.

The condition of the battle was unpromising, but not desperate. The left flank had been turned by a force probably as large as the whole of General Taylor's command. Such an important advantage in that quarter, while the force in front remained overwhelming in numbers, might well give courage to the enemy, and dishearten his opponent. General Taylor, however, began to see hope, when most others saw only despair. The enemy, in thus turning our flank, had greatly extended and attenuated his line. It was all the more liable to be severed. Besides, it exposed to the fire of much of our light artillery nearly the whole length of that part of it which had passed our flank. General Taylor saw the advantage this state of affairs was likely to open to him. He began to think he might cut off that portion of the enemy's line, and to make efforts accordingly.* These

*The hope that General Taylor indulged for a time of being able to cut off a portion of the enemy at Buena Vista probably entered into the breast of no other person on the field. As he afterwards explained, this hope was founded on the following reasons; that the Mexican cavalry had crossed the desert beyond Agua

efforts were necessarily limited by the amount and character of the means at his command. His artillery still held possession of the plateau on which he stood himself, and of the other lateral plateau, where the Mississippi regiment was posted, and was now bravely breasting the enemy's troops that had turned the flank. The artillery was made to play with destructive effect upon these troops, within the range of its fire. The Mississippi regiment, and the other volunteers, parts of the brigade that had been broken early in the day, which had joined themselves to that regiment, were also within musket range of most of the enemy's horse and foot.

Such was the state of the contest as seen from General Taylor's position, when the enemy assumed a new and very threatening aspect on his (the enemy's) extreme right. The numerous cavalry there, which had thus far spread itself somewhat loosely along the base of the mountain, was now seen concentrating itself into a heavy column. This movement was watched by General Taylor with an intense anxiety. All the aid he could afford had been sent to that quarter, and he could only await the result. It seemed hardly possible that the great disparity of strength in favor of the enemy could fail to give him signal advantages. And if he succeeded in dispersing the Mississippi regiment and its adjuncts, the hacienda of Buena Vista, with the train of supplies there, would doubtless follow in the train of misfortunes; when a junction by the victors with General Miñon, then occupying the road leading to Saltillo with some 2,000 cavalry would render the situation of the troops more immediately around General Taylor imminently hazardous. This was one of the decisive crises of the day. Happily, it had not the turn anticipated.

The heavy cavalry column of the enemy came down from the base of the mountain towards the position of the Mississippi regiment with a rapid gait; about midway, slackened its advance; and came to a pause, when within about half musket shot of its opponents. The cause of this hesitation

Nueva, and had been pushed on to Encantada, and thence, the morning of the 23d, around our flank, in rapid succession, having had little time for rest during four consecutive days; that the animals could have had no water since early in the morning, when they left the camp at Encantada; and that consequently both they and their riders must be nearly exhausted. Had he had one regiment, or even a battalion of regulars, he thought he should have been enabled to fulfil that hope.

and this pause could not be seen or even conjectured by General Taylor from his point of view. Soon after the pause, the column, by a sudden conversion, turned towards the hacienda of Buena Vista. This change was seen by General Taylor with satisfaction, for, though he had reason to apprehend disaster at that place, he did not deem it in any degree commensurate with that which had just before been apprehended. The shock of cavalry at Buena Vista that soon followed, resulted in the discomfiture or retreat of the enemy. He gained none of his objects. A part of the lancers passed over to the other side of the valley, and were lost to the battle for the remainder of the day. That part — the main part — which withdrew to the base of the mountain, took back with it exhaustion and discouragement. Those feelings were already spreading among the troops that had remained at the base, achieving nothing, and constantly galled by our light artillery, distributed here and there so as to reach the whole line of Mexicans that had turned our flank.

At this time, under such circumstances, General Taylor had reason to flatter himself with a hope of cutting off an important portion of this line. It had already begun to retrograde, and stragglers were seen scrambling up the sides of the mountain, showing that it began to break up its connection and break down in strength. This hope, however, was soon thwarted by unexpected and untoward circumstances. The appearance of the enemy's cavalry early in the morning on the plateau occupied by our troops, had disproved one of the defensive qualities of the battle field on which General Taylor had been led to rely. About midday, the unexpected appearance of a battery of three heavy guns, not far from the base of the mountains, in this same plateau, disproved another still more important defensive quality of the same, on which still greater reliance had been placed. When this battery opened its fire, it swept the plateau for a time; the foot taking shelter in the slopes of the gorges, and the light artillery, as well as head quarters, withdrawing temporarily to the lateral plateau. The enemy, however, seemed to attempt to take no other advantage of this temporary success, than to hasten the withdrawal of his line on our left flank; and the lost ground was soon recovered, our light artillery playing upon the retiring line as destructively as ever.

When General Taylor again reached his habitual position on the main plateau, a white flag was seen to approach from the enemy. The bearer stated his message to be from General Santa Anna, who desired to know, "what General Taylor wanted?" Somewhat puzzled by the apparent simplicity or stupidity of the message, and thinking, perhaps, that it had not been fully comprehended by those who translated it, General Taylor first replied that he wanted General Santa Anna to surrender. This reply was afterwards superseded by a request that General Wool would proceed to the Mexican commander, and ascertain what *he* wanted. General Taylor, as soon as he adopted this course, despatched orders along his line to cease firing in the mean time. General Wool soon returned with a report that the Mexican battery would not discontinue its fire, and that he had therefore deemed farther proceeding in the matter inexpedient. Thus ended this inexplicable parley. The object of General Santa Anna in leading to it will be left to conjecture, as he has not publicly explained it. If, as many of General Taylor's staff, who were present, believed, it were a mere fetch to gain time, or a cover to the retrograde movement a portion of his line was then making, it was an unworthy and unwarrantable proceeding. General Taylor, considering that a portion of the Mexican line was in jeopardy, and that its chief was seeking, by an early application in its behalf, the most favorable terms, probably thought the message had been sent in good faith. He doubtless felt the responsibility of rejecting it, even if he had a suspicion to the contrary. He therefore consented to a temporary suspension of the firing. It was but temporary, as the battle revived in all quarters as soon as General Wool returned to the position of General Taylor. During this interval, however, the enemy had been busy to his advantage. His long line had been constantly shortening, and General Taylor, knowing that he had not troops to arrest it by an effectual charge upon its centre at the base of the mountain, seemed to make up his mind to let the Mexicans withdraw, satisfying himself with having sustained his main positions, which had been so often and so imminently threatened throughout the day.

After watching the movement until he felt assured that no further attempt upon those positions was likely to be made by

the enemy, General Taylor, for the first time during the day, descended from the plateau, and visited the pass of Angostura, which had been so well defended by Washington's battery and the infantry volunteers supporting it. He had hardly been there many minutes, and had made only a brief observation upon its relation to the enemy's batteries and troops in front, when his ear was startled by a "very heavy musketry fire" on the plateau he had so lately left, showing that the conflict had been renewed there with great violence. This renewal, after he had supposed, with good reason, that the uncertainties of the day were over, and that his positions were safe for the night, filled him with perplexity and uneasiness. The scene of this unexpected outbreak might be a half mile or more distant. General Taylor, with his staff, urged his way back to the slope, and up to the plateau, with all possible haste. The change that had taken place there during his brief absence was appalling. He had left there three regiments of volunteers, which had proved themselves thus far firm and efficient throughout the vicissitudes of the day, and, though somewhat reduced in strength by those vicissitudes, were yet still strong in spirit and self-confidence. Now, when he reached the high level of the plateau, he saw nothing but confusion and dismay. Those regiments, broken and flying, had not a semblance of unity or strength. They met him in remnants, and drifted rapidly by him like fragments of a wreck before a vehement gale. Soon followed such parts of the light battery as had not been left in the enemy's hands. These parts were few and far between. The pieces were gone;* most of the noble animals were gone; and the officers, full of grief, with such men as had survived, rallied around head-quarters, then, for a short period, the only thing stationary amid the sweeping off of all other things before the enemy.

When nearly all had passed by, and the pursuers were pressing hotly on their traces, General Taylor slowly turned about, and somewhat doggedly took the same backward track. Those around him followed, gathering rather more closely to his side. It was the darkest moment of the battle;

* These two pieces were recaptured under General Scott at Churubusco by a portion of the same regiment to which they had belonged. It is said the men recognized them with a cry of rapture.

and when General Taylor then turned his face from the enemy, it is probable he deemed all to be lost, irrecoverably lost. Soon after he turned, however, a little light broke in upon this darkness. As he descended the slope, with the defeated hurrying before him, and the victors hurrying behind him, he saw two of the light batteries nearing its base, and also the volunteer foot, which had so manfully stood its ground near the base of the mountains, approaching the plateau by a shorter line. These batteries and this foot had been liberated from their positions in that quarter by the retreat of the enemy there, and were now most opportunely hastening to the main plateau, where they saw a fearful struggle was going on. General Taylor knew that the Mississippi regiment needed no new impulse, no further direction, and that it would soon be at the rescue; he therefore looked only to the batteries. Meeting them at the base of the slope, he ordered them to ascend at once, and open upon the enemy. The teams were jaded out, there was no infantry to back the pieces, and there was much probability that they would go up only to swell the spoil of the enemy. They went up, however, one after the other, General Taylor immediately behind them, with only a squadron of dragoons to sustain them. The horses of the batteries were urged to the death. All was to be risked where all was in peril. Coming rapidly into battery on the first level, a quick fire was opened upon the enemy, then "but a few yards from the muzzles of the pieces." At this most unexpected encounter of a formidable opposition where all opposition was supposed to be at an end, the Mexicans first slackened their eager pace, next came to a pause, and at last turned and fled.*

Simultaneously with these operations immediately under the eye of General Taylor, larger portions of the routed regiments had fled down the gorges leading to the road in front of the pass at Angostura, and soon presented themselves there in huddled masses, the enemy's lancers in close and murder-

*It was while in the rear of this battery, during this last struggle, that General Taylor's garments were twice pierced by musket shot. He afterwards said, he deemed himself then on a forlorn hope. *General Taylor's official Despatch.*

It is impossible to allude to the services rendered by these light batteries on this campaign without a glow of enthusiasm and admiration. In the expressive language of the official account of this battle, they "saved the day."

ous pursuit. Captain Washington at once saw that, if he permitted these masses and their pursuers to come upon his battery without check, his position would be overwhelmed, and he adopted the only means likely to prevent such a catastrophe. Slightly elevating his pieces, so as to point above the heads of friends, he sent his shot into the ranks of the mounted Mexicans beyond, who were crowding densely onwards after their game. Each shot emptied many a saddle; and this portion of the victors was also first brought to a stand, and soon after sent precipitately behind ridges that masked it from our fire.

Thus terminated, as unexpectedly as fortunately, the last act of this day's drama. It began in a spirit of gallant imprudence, and ended in a lamentable carnage. The line of the enemy, weakened and broken, was rapidly moving out of fire beneath the base of the mountain. General Taylor, before he left the plateau, had seen this, and having fully ascertained that he had not the force, particularly the description of force, fitted to arrest the movement, had determined to content himself with the advantages already gained, and to permit the enemy to withdraw unmolested. The troops he had left as spectators of this retreat could not, in his short absence, resist the temptation of endeavoring to interrupt it. Preparatory to his withdrawal, the enemy had concentrated his strong reserves in a ravine that there deeply seamed the high level from the road to the base of the mountain. When our troops advanced upon the retiring line, they had no apprehension of being sprung upon by this formidable body, which suddenly appeared on the crest of the ravine, and poured in upon them an overwhelming fire. To waver, break, and retreat from this fire was but the work of a short time. The enemy's lancers rushed on in pursuit with vengeful eagerness. In passing through Agua Nueva, the enemy had seen a spectacle of massacre that had heated his blood. The day had thus far given him no opportunity to cool it by retaliation. In rushing over the fallen in this discomfiture, his lancers glutted themselves with blood to satiety.*

* The vindictive cruelty with which the Mexican lancers stabbed to the death so many of our troops on this occasion, while lying in their path wounded and defenceless, calls for explanation.

A few days before General Taylor fell back from Agua Nueva, a volunteer was

The day had been cold and blustering. One or two heavy showers fell upon the field, one of them accompanied by hail. During this hail-storm, both parties seemed to come to a pause by common consent. When the sun went down, night closed in with a frosty chillness. All the troops on the ground fit for action lay down at their posts, without even their blankets to cover them, shivering with the harsh temperature, but grateful that they were among the survivors, and happy that they still occupied the positions of the morning. No ground had been lost. The bright moon looked down from a cloudless heaven, and seemed to lend a kindly aid to the sentinels on the outer guards. General Taylor lay down with the rest in harness. He did not apprehend a night attack. The enemy was exhausted as well as his own troops, and both had lost largely of their numbers. The morning, however, was expected to bring a renewal of the contest, though under a varied form. Our army had another flank that had not yet been assailed. On that side it was conjectured the enemy would re-appear. None thought he had withdrawn from the field, giving up the contest.

During the night, General Taylor looked carefully to his means of continuing the defence of his positions, which had thus far been so successfully maintained. He had few regiments of foot in an organized condition. The events of the early part of the day had more than half dismembered one of his brigades, and the events of the latter part of the day had made fearful inroads on the strength and efficiency of three regiments of other brigades. Still, he could count on some regiments that had stood firm to the end of the day, and were then lying down with him in readiness for the morrow, with

found *lassoed*, or strangled, in a gorge near the camp. A portion of his regiment went up the following day to some ranchos in that gorge, and massacred all the women and children found there, exceeding twenty in number. General Taylor, full of grief and indignation, investigated the matter, and the guilt was fixed upon a regiment, and then narrowed down to two companies ; which, refusing to give up the names of the individual perpetrators, were ordered to go to the rear in disgrace. The retrograde movement, and the battle of Buena Vista, however, almost immediately followed, and the enemy was supposed to have fully avenged the deed.

There is little doubt the enemy went into the fight resolved to give no quarter. He certainly gave none in this pursuit. The hospital at Saltillo was filled with those who had been stabbed without mercy while disabled on the ground. One man had eleven lance wounds, each lancer, as he said, giving him a thrust as he rode over him. Lieutenant-Colonel Clay first had his ankle broken by a bullet. When his body was brought in the next morning, it had three or four lance wounds, one or more of which was mortal.

such survivors as the previous day had left. He also ordered a fresh battalion at Saltillo to be replaced by the fugitives that had collected there, and to be on the field at break of day ; also, a battery of two pieces which had assisted in the defence of that place against General Miñon the day before. During the night, moreover, he received the welcome intelligence of the arrival at Saltillo of four heavy guns from Monterey. With these he could strengthen his position greatly beyond the strength of the preceding day. Having made these arrangements, General Taylor sought a few hours repose with some degree of confidence in his power to struggle through another day. Besides, he knew his antagonist better now than he did in the morning. This knowledge added to his confidence.

As the day of the 24th began to break, a report came in that the enemy had retreated. The report was set down at first as a mistake of the night, and not credited. With the growing light, however, grew the certainty of this extraordinary fact. General Taylor was soon in the saddle, in order to verify it with his own eyes. On reaching the vicinity of Encantada, the enemy's late encampment, it was indeed found that his multitudes had passed away, leaving only a wreck behind. This wreck consisted of groups of wounded and dying, which were found here and there in the more sheltered nooks and hollows through the whole distance from the road to the mountains. After a circuit over the entire grounds, General Taylor returned to the pass of Angostura, having despatched a flag after General Santa Anna to arrange an exchange of prisoners. This flag found that General still at Agua Nueva, with his army passing rapidly onwards to the interior; and on the 27th of the same month, General Taylor reoccupied that place, all the enemy, excepting a rear guard, having withdrawn out of reach. He sent forward strong reconnoitring parties as far as Encarnación the following day, which found there only such sick and wounded, considerable in numbers, as could not be taken on a hasty retreat.

It is hardly necessary to comment much upon the battle of Buena Vista. The sketch we have given of its principal incidents, leaves out of view most of its details. Our purpose has been merely to present it in connection with General Taylor. His predominant agency in controlling the fortunes

of the day is obvious from that sketch. That control had not, however, been complete. General Taylor's position at Buena Vista was strictly defensive. His object was to repel the Mexicans. He had no expectations of doing more, and he knew that doing thus much would be winning nearly all. General Santa Anna* had left San Luis de Potosi with a large army, and with small supplies. His blow must be struck without delay; he must beat General Taylor at once, or his large army must fall back again. It is said hunger will eat through stone-walls. General Santa Anna told his hungry multitudes that there was enough to eat on the other side of General Taylor's positions; that they must capture his train at Buena Vista, and get at his depot at Saltillo. This they attempted to do, but with more appetite than courage and conduct.

As we have remarked, General Taylor proposed to act at Buena Vista on the defensive; for the double reason, that the defensive was suited to the smallness and character of his force, and was likely to compass his objects. He intended nothing salient. The departures from this prudential course, that occurred during the 23d, were not authorized by him. The first departure was in the morning, before he came on the field, that is, by the brigade of Indiana volunteers. That brigade advanced upon the enemy with more zeal than judgment, and the consequences threw, for a time, a doubt over the issues of the day. Had this brigade stood where General Wool had placed it, these consequences had probably been averted. The second departure was at the close of the day. The three gallant regiments, which had contributed to maintain the plateau so long, heedlessly threw themselves, during the temporary absence of General Taylor from it, into a consuming fire. If they erred, (and no doubt they *did* err,) bitterly did they suffer for it. Again were the issues of the

* General Santa Anna was an extraordinary man in all situations but in the field of battle. Even there his designs were often good, but seldom carried out to their proper and seemingly attainable results. But, in bringing forth men, arms, supplies, &c., he showed almost a creative power. He lost all, only to regain all. Beaten, dispersed, he soon rallied as strong as ever. His stern determination was, to make no peace while an invader trod the soil of Mexico. And he had the inflexibility of spirit to have fulfilled this determination, even at the cost of desolating half his country. He well knew that, if he could not drive us out, he could starve us out. Fortunately for us, he gave up his power to those who were less lofty, or more yielding, in spirit.

day in fearful jeopardy. During these moments of dark discouragement, General Taylor's firmness and resource were conspicuous. In neither instance did a shade of weakness pass over his countenance. Those who leaned upon him for support where every thing seemed to be tottering to a fall, found that he held them up. In these moments, and in others less trying, he listened to suggestions and to warnings from those around him with patient heed, but appeared at all times to be guided by the decisions of his own judgment. The whole field was within his view, he saw all, and rapidly determined how to manage all. He said little ; seemed to ponder deeply ; dictated his orders promptly, and sometimes with sharpness ; and overlooked the battle with a spirit that paid no regard to its dangers, and with a mind that felt equal to all its vicissitudes and emergencies.

After it became certain that General Santa Anna, with his main force, had left San Luis and had marched to meet General Scott, General Taylor, leaving General Wool in command above, descended to Monterey, where the dangers were then most threatening. When General Santa Anna determined to attack General Taylor, he sent through the bridle-paths of the Sierra Madre a strong mounted force, to menace the line of communication with the Rio Grande. While the contest was going on near Saltillo, that line of communication was broken by strong parties, which destroyed some large trains, dispersed others, and for a time severed the interior from the river. Having restored the communication, General Taylor reoccupied his encampment near Monterey, and there awaited in quiet the further instructions of his government. These instructions led him to anticipate that he was to be provided with a force which would enable him to penetrate the interior of Mexico, and join General Scott at the capital, which that General was then approaching through a series of brilliant victories. In his correspondence with the government on the subject of this force, General Taylor had expressed an opinion that its amount should be 20,000 men, one half to be regulars, with 5000 men to keep open the communication with the Rio Grande.

With the anticipation alluded to, General Taylor at once began the preparations that depended on him. Means of transportation were provided, and supplies were fast coming

up from the depots on the river below, and going forward to Saltillo. As peace, notwithstanding his own victories, and those achieved by General Scott, seemed still as remote as ever, General Taylor began to believe that his march to the city of Mexico would be required, even if not more than half the numbers he had designated were placed at his disposal. In fact, it became more and more probable each day that his column for this purpose would not exceed that with which he advanced on Monterey. With such a diminished column, or even with one still smaller, he expressed his willingness to go forward if required, and run his chances, unpromising as they seemed to be. Those around him regarded the march as a desperate attempt, particularly since the government had resolved to pay the Mexicans for no more supplies taken from them. Thus far we had made the products of the country available by buying them at a fair price. The moment that price should be withheld, these products would be withheld also. General Santa Anna proposed a Roman plan of defence, — that is, to spread desolation before our march. As long as we paid for what we required, this plan could not be carried into effect. The change directed by our government would probably have enabled him to do so. It would have required no argument to convince the Mexicans, that their chances for remuneration from their own government would be greatly improved, if, with patriotic spirit, they consented to destroy their crops, rather than permit them to fall, unpaid for, into our hands. General Taylor often said that, if he could reach some of the rich valleys on the route beyond San Luis, he would be safe. Others believed he would never reach those valleys ; or, if he did, he would find them no longer rich in produce. He would probably have advanced into a desert ; his animals would have first failed ; then his men ; and the result of the attempt would doubtless have been a deplorable catastrophe, as deplorable as any that marks the darkest day of Roman disaster. Happily, a peace arrested the attempt.

While resting at his encampment near Monterey, still a dweller in tents,* General Taylor's mind was much occupied

* General Taylor, from the time he left the Rio Grande — probably from the time he left Corpus Christi — slept constantly under canvas. He had a private vehicle always at hand, but never took a seat in it.

by the growing probability of his becoming a candidate for the Presidency of the United States at the coming election. Such a probability had been foreshadowed for many months. Soon after the two battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma, the papers began to intimate that his services merited such a reward. He paid no regard to these intimations, or regarded them only as complimentary outpourings of individual enthusiasm. It was not until friends of high standing for character, and high in political life, gave him strong assurances that a just regard for popular opinion demanded of him consent, that he was willing to allow his name to be used in the canvass. Even at this stage of the matter, he looked with unfeigned concern upon the course he was persuaded to take. He was about to enter upon an untried field, one for which his experience had seemed to give him no fitness. Such distrust was most reasonable under the circumstances; though it was also equally reasonable, after more reflection, that that distrust should diminish. His thoughts appeared to be turned with deep attention upon the nature of the duties such a new position would bring upon him. Not that he spoke as if he had any confidence in his being called upon to occupy that position. He spoke with soldierly familiarity to those around him on the subject, and his remarks were always of a general character, and in harmony with expressions seen in his published letters written at that season. Their prevailing characteristics were, good sense, honesty of purpose, independence of party prejudices, and a profound reverence for the constitution.

This political prospect made General Taylor liable to constant approaches through flattering and zealous professions. No man approached him twice through that avenue. His impassive countenance, or a word or two of indifference, repulsed, or discouraged, all such approaches. It may be doubted whether any man became his political friend in this canvass through any hope, raised in any interview with him, of individual preferment. Those who were most with him, and whom he trusted and esteemed, never, we will venture to say, heard from his lips a word that raised in them such a hope.

General Taylor had no enthusiasm of opinion. His estimate of men was moderate. Qualities which give *éclat* and

notoriety waked in him no regard, much less any admiration. He looked to practical wisdom, to power in action. His discernment of character was acute, and hardly liable to be deceived. In his military career, he seldom erred in his estimate of those who could best carry out his purposes. After satisfactory proof of efficiency, his confidence manifested itself on all fitting occasions. Still, he seemed to lean on no one. He seemed to feel as if he could at all times stand alone. The only remark of self-praise he, perhaps, made in camp was, that his "faculties seemed to sharpen as difficulties thickened."

All his habits were simple. In camp, his dress was even careless. Indeed, it was evident that no thought respecting it ever entered his mind. While engaged in writing in his warm tent, he generally sat divested of his upper garments, and, if a call were made on him in that situation, came forth to receive it as the call found him. If the call were made by a stranger, this aspect of extreme simplicity, of disregard of appearances, may have been noticed, for a few minutes, with surprise, and as an incongruity; though, probably, none withdrew from an interview with him without an elevated regard for a character that stood forth in such Doric plainness and strength. The abstemiousness of his appetites was in keeping with this exterior. His ordinary drink was water. He tasted no ardent spirits, and seldom drank even wine. His food was plain, and always taken with the relish of a good appetite. These habits gave him general health. During his campaign in Mexico, he had no indisposition that demanded medicine as a remedy. Abstinence was his remedy. This healthy condition of his body enabled him to keep his saddle in all movements. From the Rio Grande until his return to that river, he made his movements in that way alone.

As soon as General Taylor found that no further active operations were likely to take place on the Monterey line, he requested leave of absence for six months, in order to attend to his private concerns,* which had been much deranged during his campaigns. This leave was granted, and he returned to the United States in November, 1848, being re-

* General Taylor had large plantations on the Mississippi.

ceived with enthusiasm at New Orleans, and such other places in that vicinity as he visited, either in the course of military duty, or to look after his property. Taking post at Baton Rouge, Louisiana, he there remained mostly during the canvass that resulted in his election to the Presidency. His part in this canvass was probably nothing; and no doubt he fully justified, under the trying temptations that beset such a position, the high compliment, already quoted, paid to him, in this respect, by the distinguished Senator from Massachusetts. Mr. Webster, in the same address, further remarks, "unfortunately, his (General Taylor's) career at the head of the government was short;" adding, that he believed "he had left on the mind of the country a strong impression, first, of his absolute honesty and integrity of character and his good sense, and lastly, of the mildness and friendliness of his temper towards all his countrymen. But, he is gone!* He is ours no more, except in the force of his example."

That example would not be without its beneficial influence in a large degree, even if it only showed a character, which, through all the changes of a long life, marked by achievements of great renown, never lost its simplicity and honesty. Those who saw General Taylor before the defence of Fort Harrison, and saw him after the battle of Buena Vista, saw in him no change. Those who sat down with him in his mess-tent in the field, and afterwards sat down with him at his table in the Presidential mansion, saw as little change. The man was the same. Few men pass through such ordeals in such wise. Those who do, have a dignity of nature that may well give force to an example.

ART. II. — *Report to the Corporation of Brown University on Changes in the System of Collegiate Education*; read March 28, 1850. Providence: George H. Whitney. 8vo. pp. 76.

THE Report to the Corporation of Brown University on the subject of changes in the Collegiate System of Education,

* General Taylor died at Washington City, on the 9th of July, 1850.